THE

NEW-JERUSALEM MAGAZINE.

Vol. XIII. APRIL, 1889. No. 4.

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PUBLISHED BY

THE MASSACHUSETTS NEW-CHURCH UNION,

No. 169 TREMONT STREET, BOSTON.

Entered as Second-class Mail Matter.

THE NEW-JERUSALEM MAGAZINE.

Published MONTHLY, under the auspices of the

Massachusetts Association of the New Church,

—AT—

No. 169 TREMONT STREET,

BOSTON.

Its object is to promote the reception in Mind and Life of the truths of the New Church, contained in the Holy Word, and set forth in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.

"*The two essentials of the New Church are, that the Lord alone is the God of Heaven and Earth, and that conjunction with Him is through a life according to the commandments of the Decalogue.*"

All business communications should be addressed to the "PUBLISHERS OF THE NEW-JERUSALEM MAGAZINE, No. 169 Tremont Street, Boston."

All matter for insertion may be sent to "THE EDITOR OF THE NEW-JERUSALEM MAGAZINE," at the same office.

TERMS:

Payable in advance, (including postage) - - - -	$2.00 a Year.
To Clergymen and Students in Theological Schools,	1.00 a Year.
To subscribers in Great Britain - - - - -	10 shillings a Year.
Clergymen " " " - - - - -	6 shillings a Year.

Single numbers, 20 cents.

The Volumes of the New Series bound in cloth, uniform style, are for sale at $2.50 each. Subscribers having numbers in good condition may exchange them for the bound volume, on payment of seventy-five cents and the carriage both ways.

The Magazine is continued at end of subscription unless otherwise ordered.

THE CHILDREN'S NEW-CHURCH MAGAZINE,

PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

TERMS:—Payable in Advance, (including postage) $1.00 a Year.
To subscribers in Great Britain - 5 shillings a Year.

Remittances for either Magazine may be made in P. O. Money Orders, Checks, or Registered Letters, made payable to the order of EDWARD A. WHISTON, Agent. Money in letters not registered is at sender's risk.

MASSACHUSETTS NEW-CHURCH UNION,

No. 169 TREMONT STREET, BOSTON.

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NEW-JERUSALEM MAGAZINE.

VOL. XIII.—NEW SERIES.—No. 4.

APRIL, 1889.

SWEDENBORG AND DANTE.

I.

DANTE has been read and re-read, translated and commented upon now for five centuries. But has any one ever undertaken to discover how much of truth there is in Dante?

Perhaps the age for seeking the truth in any thing is gone by? Rather, the scientist would be likely to say, it has never come, till now. For ages, it would seem as if the world had never seriously asked for the truth regarding the spiritual world, and that which must constitute by far the most important part of man's life and destiny. In Dante's own time, if we may judge from Boccaccio's comments on his life and his great poem, theology and poesy were regarded as occupying nearly the same rank in importance and in authority. Even the dogmatic assertions of the church respecting the unseen world were regarded with a kind of ceremonial respect, as if they belonged to a class of things more fictitious than real, sacred fictions, indeed, but still fictions like the myths of old and the tales of the poets.

In the history of literature there have been produced works which, while not claiming to be the utterances of revelation, have yet occupied a place of authority and influence resembling that which is accorded to the Divine oracles themselves. Such, for instance, was the whole system of the Platonic philosophy, but especially the doctrine concerning the spiritual and intellectual nature of man and the immortality of the

soul. Such we may say has been the position allotted to the *Divina Commedia* of Dante, and perhaps, in less degree, to the "Paradise Lost" of Milton. While not accepted as Divine revelations on these hidden subjects, they have been regarded as a treasury of consecrated and hallowed fictions — descriptions which if not true are about as likely to be true as anything we can know on the subject, and as therefore good substitutes for the truth where no absolute or demonstrated truth is to be obtained on the subjects in question. So have grown up, as Swedenborg describes such phenomena in the world of spirits, a whole system of artificial heavens and hells and their hierarchies, having no immediate basis in anything revealed, and yet held in popular religious estimation as practically about as valid as revelation itself.

The actual validity of these speculations and their influence as touching the religious life of men must always depend, however, on the amount of supernatural authority ascribed to them or the amount of revelation recognized in them, and, therefore, first of all, on the amount and kind of truth recognized in revelation itself. It is a question whether the Platonic philosophy, even its sublime doctrine of the soul's immortality, exerted a strictly religious effect on the Hellenic people until after the Christian Church had in a sense accepted, approved, and given it its supreme sanction. In other words, Platonism did its refining, spiritualizing, and elevating work more after the Christian theologians accepted it as a precious vehicle of the church's teaching than it had ever done before. What it needed was a standard by which the actual truth in it might be estimated, and so admiration for it as a philosophy be turned into reverence for it as revelation. This standard was found in the Gospel of Christianity. That it had meanwhile exerted a certain intellectual influence of the highest importance in preparing, not only the Hellenic, but the whole mind of the intelligent world at that period for its future reception of the revealed Word, cannot be questioned; rather we may say it was an indispensable forerunner sent by the Divine Providence for this training of the "understanding so that it might be elevated into the light of heaven,"

even while the will of humanity lay still degraded in its lost and helpless condition.

In an article elsewhere on the "Italian Renaissance in its Relation to the Lord's Second Advent," I have endeavored to show how these extraordinary intellectual illuminations have preceded alike, and in both instances, by a period of about four centuries, the two events of the Lord's advent to man in new and immediate revelations of Divine truth from Himself, namely, that of the Incarnation, and that of the opening of the Spiritual Sense of the Word; and that the wide prevalence of Hellenic culture, which anticipated the coming of the Lord as the Word made Flesh, has its remarkable counterpart in the intellectual influence of the Italian Renaissance or the revival of learning in preparing the world for the reception of that deeper revelation of the Word which has enabled the church to "enter intellectually into the things of faith."

Without dwelling on this subject in its broader aspects, I wish in the present paper to examine in the briefest possible scope the part which Dante's *Commedia* has had to play in this providential course of the world's education, and the estimate we are to put upon the description he gives us of the life after death. While not contributing directly to the revival of learning, the great Italian epic may be said to be a summary of all the learning of that time, whether astrological, geographical, political, theological, or moral. It is not so much a poem as a great realistic picture of the whole universe, spiritual and natural, as it then stood clearly outlined in the view of the mighty intellect of its author. The language in which it was written became thereby elevated to the dignity of a literary tongue to be honored by a glorious succession of poets, historians, and philosophers; while the subject matter became, as above described, a kind of universally accepted "working hypothesis" regarding the nature of the spiritual world, whereby the great gap in authentic dogmatic teaching was conveniently filled out in a manner suited to the imaginative wants of the people and the practical demands of moral and religious discipline. By a comparison with such works as Milton's "Paradise Lost" and Bunyan's

"Pilgrim's Progress" we can form, I believe, a just estimate of the actual effect produced by this grand epic of the unseen world upon the popular religious mind, not only of contemporary but of succeeding generations, — remembering too, as we must, that Dante preceded Milton by a period as long as that from the discovery of America by Columbus to the end of the Revolutionary War.

Referring to the analogy briefly alluded to above, I think we shall find a close resemblance between the kind of authority hitherto attributed to Dante's visons of the other world and that which, before the Christian era, was attributed to Socrates's and Plato's teachings in relation to the life after death. According to the light of the time these visions were neither improbable nor unreasonable; not only not contrary to Scripture, they were in the boldest literal confirmation of the teaching of both the Bible and the Church Fathers. Still there was much in them that could be traced to no sacred source of authority, and this sometimes embraced principles of vast and fundamental importance. How much, then, of truthful information might men really look for in this vastly popular allegory, this great myth that has been throwing its awful lustre, now bright, now dark, over the groping thoughts of the Christian world during the centuries that preceded the Lord's Second Advent?

To this question no answer could be given but by comparing the visions of Dante with something that could be accepted as a standard of truth on these same subjects; and, as such a standard could only be found in Revelation, and as Revelation, beyond the bare indications of a few broad, general truths on the subject of the judgment and heaven and hell, has been believed to contain no particulars regarding the life after death, therefore there has been no means of estimating the amount of actual truth in Dante's description of that life.

In a state of similar doubt or mere guessing at the reality in regard to which there is no accepted standard of revealed truth, stands the world at the present day except for the revelation Divinely given to us in the writings of Emanuel Swe-

denborg. This messenger and servant of the Lord has, so he avers, been permitted by the Lord to enter that hitherto hidden world, and to tell now in plain, unpoetical, and unfanciful terms the facts regarding its nature, its order, its government, and its life. For the first time are men, in the possession of these writings, possessed of a standard whereby, with an accuracy and a certainty no less than scientific, they may determine the amount of truth in the visions of Dante.

It is not for a moment to be understood that Dante ever gave his visions forth as other than pure poetry, or as having more than an allegoric basis of truth; nor that the world has ever formally sanctioned them as having anything of a supernatural character; neither has it done so with Milton or Bunyan; and yet who will say that the religious thought and the anticipations of the other life of Protestant Christian minds for the past two centuries have not been greatly tinged by the reflections cast from the imaginations of these two writers? So with Dante, while neither professedly prophet nor seer, nor pope, nor doctor of theology; yet in reality the power of his great poem has been that of all these combined in coloring the thoughts and affections of men in their visions of the world to come. And, while granting to Dante his full title of poet as a truly great creator of these imaginary worlds through which he leads us in his awful pilgrimage, yet even the imagination must have some material, and some scaffolding of information, of former doctrine or knowledge of some kind on which and with which to build. And it is this question as to fundamental sources of Dante's ideas of the spiritual world that chiefly interests us in attempting a comparison between Dante and Swedenborg.

The natural inference would be that Dante, in writing an account of an imaginary pilgrimage through hell and purgatory and heaven, would describe those realms according to the vulgar conceptions then entertained, something as the miracle plays have done, or that the common traditions of the church and the few grand hints of the literal Scriptures would have sufficed for the material to be employed. As a matter of fact, we find, in one sense, the heaven and the hell of

Dante a very narrow, commonplace, every-day kind of world; more so even than that of Swedenborg's *Memorable Relations.* The people the poet meets with there are his former over-the-way, Florentine neighbors, who inquire about their relatives, or wish to be informed as to the progress of public affairs in their quarrelsome little town. The rewards and punishments of eternity are dispensed through the hand of the poet's own resentment or favor towards his former political associates; the scenery, the manners and customs, the courtesies and the jeers and insults he meets with are all reflected from the narrow sphere of north Italian life. When we come to broader subjects, we find indeed the poet's vision and grasp widening accordingly, but still subject to the limitations of traditional learning.

Thus his cosmology and geography are those of Homer, Plato, and the literal Bible combined; the earth being in the centre of the universe surrounded by the seven planetary spheres, or revolving heavens, beyond which is the heaven of fixed stars, then the moving but unmoved sphere of the seraphim and angels all concentering above in the "Rose of the blessed," on whose petals as on thrones in successive ranks are seated the saints and innocent children all surrounding the lake of the Light inapproachable, where dwells the Atomic Point, the eternal Three-in-One. On the earth's surface, in the middle of the eastern hemisphere, is situated Jerusalem, directly beneath which the hells descend in successive degrees to the inmost point or the earth's centre, where is the abode of Lucifer; thence is an ascent through the other side of the earth to a high projection or mountain far out in the midst of the ocean beyond the gates of Hercules, forming the middle point of the western hemisphere and the exact antipodes of Jerusalem. On this mountain are the successive planes or spheres of purgatory, culminating in the terrestrial Eden from which the ascent opens into the lowest of the planetary heavens or abodes of saved souls.

The assignment of souls to their several degrees and kinds and places of punishment and reward involves a classification of moral virtues partly traceable to the Aristotelian ethics

and partly to the theology of the Christian Fathers; and the discussions introduced, here and there, of profound theological topics reveal the poet's familiarity with the best fruits of both the philosophy and theology of all the ages that had preceded him. So we find the man mounting with his theme; minute, blunt, and familiar in his descriptions of the Inferno; in the Paradiso his language wears the garb of an archangel, dazzling us with its splendor and opening to us vistas of unsearchable light. It is said that his name was, in its original form, Durante, and so his whole name, Durante Alighieri, might be said to mean the Enduring Winged One. And with an eagle's flight his imagination, his ardor, and his philosophy and Christian faith combined mount straight upward to the sun, the more and more unhindered in his gaze as he soars away from earth.

But whether, taking him in his widest and sublimest capacity as a poet, or in his most local and personal narrowness as an exiled and embittered Florentine, and giving due credit to both contemporary and older philosophy and theology for his ideas, whether of earth or heaven or of the nature of man, we shall still, I believe, find in Dante much that is difficult to trace to any earlier source, much that seems wholly beyond and above the ordinary theological scope of Christian teaching, much that in its strong, direct declaring of things untold before makes the poet seem to speak rather like a seer and prophet than like a mere rhymster of the sacred fictions of his time.

I refer especially to certain broad features of the plan of the poem, involving principles of classification which bear a close resemblance to those of Swedenborg, and also to certain ideas and definitions, both of human and Divine nature, which gleam with the unmistakable light of revealed truth. That these were never understood fully by even the poet himself, in all their deepest significance, in fact, as anything more than poetic intuition or invention, may be readily admitted; that they never have brought to man any accredited Divine message is also true; but that they are in reality foregleams of that great dawn of light which under the

Divine ruling has in our time risen upon the world through the revelations granted to Swedenborg, and that the great poem is thus rich in a wisdom whose worth will rather brighten than diminish in lustre as it is brought under the light of the knowledge now revealed, we may confidently believe. By the side of its numerous passages luminous with spiritual truth, we shall indeed find others in close contiguity so intrinsically absurd, so grossly offensive to our sense of charity and of justice, or characterized by so rigid and blind an adherence to the orthodoxy of the poet's time, whether in things theological, political, or scientific, that we can be in no danger of forgetting the frail human authorship of the poem and the wide distinction that must ever be drawn between this epic of mediaeval imagination and the great relation which now comes to us in terms of unmistakable authority, *ex visis et auditis*, from "things heard and seen." Nothing could more emphatically declare this distinction than the words with which Swedenborg, in all the consciousness of his sacred and responsible mission as a revealer of things hitherto kept secret from the foundation of the world, explains the purpose of his intromission into the spiritual world. Here we find nothing of the grey twilight of the land of dreams, nothing of the splendors of ecstatic vision; rather is it the plain testimony of a man charged with an important message to his fellowmen of which he was more mindful that the substance be truly given than that the form should be pleasing to the recipient.

Dante begins his poem by narrating how, —

> Midway upon the journey of our life
> I found me in a dark and dreary wood
> Where the straight way to me no more appeared.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Nor know I how to tell how I did come there,
> So full of sleep was I at that strange moment
> When the true way I had abandoned.

He falls in with three wild beasts, and in his terror comes upon the shade of Virgil who offers to become his guide

through the fearful caverns of the lower world and out into the upper spheres again. After much fear and hesitation he consents to follow his guide upon this sombre pilgrimage. And so they enter the fearful gate which forms the entrance to the hells, over which is written the memorable words:

> By me they enter to the doleful city,
> By me they go into eternal pain,
> By me they seek the dwellings of the lost,
> Justice did move the hand of my great builder;
> I was constructed by the power Divine
> The highest Wisdom and the primal Love.
> Before my being, were no things created,
> Only th' eternal; and I shall ever be.
> Bid hope farewell, all ye who enter here.

Virgil explains the meaning of these words, leads the poet within, and thus, says Dante,

> He ushered me *within the secret things.*

Compare this with the following announcement which Swedenborg makes at the beginning of his "Heaven and Hell":

In the end of the church when there is no longer love and thence no faith, the Lord is to open the Word as to its internal sense and to reveal the hidden things of heaven. The hidden things which are revealed in what now follows (that is, in the treatise on "Heaven and Hell") concern heaven and hell and the life of men after death. The man of the church at this day knows scarcely anything about heaven and hell, nor about his life after death, although they are all described in the Word; yea many also who were born within the church deny those things, saying, Who has come thence and told us?

Lest therefore such denial which reigns especially with those who have much wisdom of the world should also infect and corrupt the simple in heart and simple in faith, it has been given me to be altogether with the angels, and to speak with them as man with man and also to see the things which are in the heavens and in the hells, and this during thirteen years; and now to describe them from things seen and heard, hoping that thus ignorance may be enlightened and incredulity dispelled." (Introduction to "Heaven and Hell.")

In what manner, then, we are led to inquire, does the picture drawn in the *Divina Commedia* bear the test of that light of actual knowledge which has now, in the way and for the purpose thus declared by Swedenborg, been given to the world?

To trace in detail all the coincidences of description between the poem of Dante and the "Heaven and Hell" of Swedenborg would require volumes rather than the few pages at our disposal. The most I can attempt will be to point out a few of the remarkable analogies and resemblances between the two works, leaving the reader at his pleasure to pursue the subject more into particulars.*

The first thing I would call attention to is the every-day, human reality which Dante gives to the spiritual world. No world is more substantial, visible, and tangible, or crowded with more busy, practical, human activity than the spheres visited by the poet's imagination. This is no world of ghosts or of shades leading an unconscious existence until some future judgment day shall wake them to life again; they are all intensely alive now, and alive as men and women in human bodies, recognizable and still possessing all the leading traits of character that they had in the world. It is true Dante speaks of the Last Judgment as yet to come, but the wicked are in hell already, notwithstanding, and all the change the final judgment will effect in their case will be to finally close the pits which still remain open only for more to enter. So are the good already enjoying the blessed life of heaven, and the spirits not yet purified are lingering a longer and shorter time in the outer courts according to the preparation they need to undergo. In a word, it is a perfectly human world that Dante visits; it is almost a Florentine world in parts, so real and familiar does the poet make its scenes; even as Swedenborg speaks of certain cities of earth having their counterparts in the world of spirits. Unlike Milton, who

* For a study of this kind I know of no English work more helpful than the very interesting volume entitled, "A Shadow of Dante: being an Essay towards studying Himself, His World, and His Pilgrimage," by Maria Francesca Rossetti. London: Rivingtons. 1871. For a translation, I believe Longfellow's to be far superior to any other.

makes his personages wear a kind of stage-like dignity in speech and bearing corresponding with his lofty theme, Dante puts the commonest, every-day phrases into his conversations, and so intensely human are the very griefs and sorrows he describes that we are moved by a pathos that is irresistible.

It may seem as if the realism of Dante's description must be largely destroyed by his introduction of griffons, centaurs, and other monstrous forms more suggestive of pagan mythology than of ordinary human experience; but it is well to remember that even the monsters of mythology were not without a cause and a meaning, often a very practical one; and how large a part such actual perversions and distortions of humanity do actually play in the real hells of Swedenborg, we need only read such passages as the following to learn:

> At the apertures (to the infernal societies) which are called the gates of hell, for the most part appears a monster which in general represents the form of those who are within. The fierce passions of those who dwell there are then at the same time represented by dreadful and atrocious things, the particular mention of which I omit. . . . From an inspection of those monstrous forms of spirits in the hells, which as was said are all forms of contempt of others and of menaces against those who do not pay them honor and respect, also forms of hatred and revenge against those who do not favor them, it appeared evident that all in general were forms of the love of self and the love of the world; and that the evils of which they are the specific forms derive their origin from these two loves. (H. H. 553, 554.)

We have next to notice that in the general divisions of the spiritual world, Dante adheres to the numbers three, seven, and nine, in a manner wholly in accord with their real spiritual meaning; and in his trinal classification there is a strong semblance of the doctrine of the degrees of the human mind. According to the Christian belief, universally entertained up to the time of the Reformation, the world of the departed consists of three grand divisions, hell, purgatory, and heaven; and the descriptions of these in the order of the poet's pilgrimage through them constitute respectively

the three great canticles of the *Divina Commedia*, named accordingly, *Il Inferno*, *Il Purgatorio*, and *Il Paradiso*.

The purgatory or intermediate world between hell and heaven corresponds to the world of spirits of Swedenborg in so far as it is the place of preparation for heaven for all those departing from this world who can be saved; but those who are fit only for hell are carried thither at once across the dark flood of Acheron, according to the poet; whereas we are taught in Swedenborg that all those who die, both good and bad alike, enter the intermediate world of spirits, and that there they undergo the judgment, and are prepared for their future lot either in the realms above or below. Swedenborg, however, draws this distinction between the use of this intermediate world for those who can and those who cannot be saved, that the former undergo there the three states, namely, "of their exteriors" and "of their interiors," which two states constitute their judgment, or the determination of their ruling love, and the third state which is that of "instruction and preparation" for heaven.

> This third state is therefore only for those who come into heaven and become angels, but not for those who come into hell, since these cannot be instructed, and their second state is also their third. (H. H. 512.)

Indeed we read that there are some

> who immediately after death are either taken up into heaven, or cast into hell. Those who are immediately taken up into heaven are those who have been regenerated, and thus prepared for heaven in the world. Those who are so regenerated and prepared that they have need only to reject natural impurities with the body are borne immediately by the angels into heaven. I have seen them taken up soon after the hour of death. But those who have been interiorly wicked, and exteriorly, as to appearance, good, thus who have filled their malignity with deceit and have used goodness as a means of deceiving, are immediately cast into hell. (H. H. 491.)

Here it may be well to notice that in Dante as in Swedenborg all the bodily conditions and surroundings of souls in

the other world are really representatives and effects of inward moral conditions. For in a letter to one of his patrons Dante writes:

> The subject of all the work, accepted literally only, is the state of souls after death, taken simply; because respecting it and around it the process of all the work revolves. But if the work is accepted allegorically, the subject is man, in so far as by free-will meriting and demeriting he is amenable to the justice of reward and punishment. (*Letter to Car. Grande della Scala*, 7.)

Florence, Italy. FRANK SEWALL.

THE DAWN.

WITHIN the cañon's depth of wintry gloom,
The approaching sun barred out by mountain wall,
Long, wistful eyes watch, on far rim of heights, his first touch fall;
And suddenly all shadows change to golden bloom;
Trees wrapped in light!
Birds wing with shining flashes thro' the air!
A glory as of heaven o'er all things there!

So in life's shadow-times, — when each new day
Brings night of soul where good seems blind and mute,
The stone slow backward rolls, and holy truth, — bound hand and foot
Within the darkness of the mind, and laid away, —
Arising, stands,
Transfigured at the call Divine, — "Come forth!"
The dawn of a new heaven, o'er a new earth!

O, weary child, — within the Father's love abide!
Hath not the year's dark winter
Its Christmas-tide?

Portland, Ore. ELVIRA HUTCHINGS.

WINGS AND FETTERS.

By wings and fetters are meant impelling and impeding matters affecting the progress of the New Age in respect to the establishment of the New Church. The church is the vital part of the Age, for, as every one knows from Egypt and Greece and Rome, the Age may be advancing as to the arts of peace and war, comfort may be increasing and power and wealth may be attaining that degree of growth which will excite the wonder of later ages, when all the time the truly rational among men is declining, and spiritual life is unknown. Babylon was never so magnificent, judged by the world's standard, as in the days of Belshazzar; but, judged by a higher standard it was *mene, mene, tekel, upharsin;* measured, weighed, and condemned. Our writers speak of the signs of the Lord's Second Coming, and reckon the telegraph, the railway, the printing-press, the steamship; but they know that these signs of material progress do not show religious advance unless it is seen that they accompany increasing brotherliness among nations and the development of true humanity.

We should think primarily of what is spiritual, which can properly be termed the New Church, if we do not so narrow the phrase as to mean only ourselves, forgetting that, as its army in the field did not represent the whole patriotism of the American Revolution, so there is a multitude not numbered by man of those who are trying to reform their religions and to realize the promises of Scripture.

Our thought of the New Church should always note the fact that the Scripture is full of wonderful promises of good. Scripture is not all promise, some of it is reproof, some instruction unto righteousness, some history of human decline, but in many places it is prophetic, prophetic of the evil results of waywardness, and prophetic also of the ineffable benefits of the Lord's Coming. The pictures so presented are almost too dazzling to be surveyed. With their light the Lord cov-

ers Himself as with a garment. When we behold the vision there is no strength left in us. Babylon will be found no more at all. The sun will no more go down. There will be no more curse, neither will they learn war any more. With joy we shall draw water out of the wells of salvation. And God shall wipe away tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of His people shall he take away from off all the earth, "for the Lord hath spoken it."

All such predictions are in the way of their fulfilment so far as a New Church really exists. Where they are fulfilling, it is; where they are not fulfilling, it is not. We cannot obtain these blessings through any other avenue than the golden street of the Holy City. Therefore, we have a right to ask that we may have some realization of these blessings in our meetings and in our lives. Something of that deep spiritual joy which our Lord spake of to His disciples should be in possession with us, should shine from our faces, should be heard in our songs of praise, and should appear in our hopefulness and devotedness. Our meetings, local and general, should be joyful means of inspiration to ourselves and to others. Without closing our eyes to the very sad things of the world, we should not confine our glance to them; but should let it rest also on the priceless remedies of the world's sickness which we have in hand, and on the promised land towards which with slow step men wander in the wilderness.

Without attempting to assert that our people of today are less hopeful and less uplifted by the holy promises than they were a generation ago, let it be said, without fear of contradiction, that a degree of anxiety is felt by many which almost shuts from them the light of the new day. It is not unheard of for a meeting to be held which has a discouraging effect. It is not uncommon for one to be met with among us whose countenance indicates unrest. It is to be confessed that, in our conscientious desire to keep within the truth, we sometimes speak so severely of our people as to discourage them.

A young minister was somewhat surprised once to hear one of his people say, "Since your recent sermon on prayer, I have ceased to pray." "Ceased to pray, dear friend? Why,

nothing was further from my purpose than to stop your praying. I but endeavored to tell how to pray." "Yes, but you said that, if we could not pray in a spirit of submission, it would be better not to pray at all, and I cannot feel resigned to being sick and useless." The young minister learned that he had destroyed in that mind the very foundation on which he would build, by so sharply reproving imperfection as to check all further effort to improve.

Something of this sort may happen to us in our anxiety to have the best life at once adopted by our people, to have the most accurate thought at once prevail. We put the Egyptian image of Truth into one scale and in the other, we lay this man or that man, this scheme or that scheme, this society or that association, and, behold, not one weighs right, and so we draw black lines over the Lord's white ones, and over against the marvellous promises we write that we are fearful and unbelieving. If Ezekiel, when the first thousand cubits were measured, had noted that the waters came only to the ankles, and had set up a lamentation for the desert which never could blossom, he would have fairly represented us when we lament that the first faint streaks of dawn are not full day, and express our fear that the sun will be overpowered by the night. Such effects does honest anxiety have upon us if we let it master us.

What have we to encourage our hopes and give calm confidence to our efforts? When reckoning the progress of the New Church we commonly first speak of our societies. This is perhaps a serious mistake. They are, of course, first in order of importance, though, in the order of time, they are second to the promulgation of the truths by which they are developed. But at this very early stage of progress it is not best to make too much of the societies. There is a great deal of grim holding on to be done in the days of beginning, of dwelling in the wilderness till the time of showing unto Israel. Some of our societies are planted in small places, even where the population is declining, and are scarcely holding their own. Their prosperity depends also very much on the physical and intellectual ability of their ministers to hold services,

on the quality of their leading people, and on the strength of adverse movements.

These are reasons why it is unadvisable to say to one's self in effect, "If the New Church is growing, every one of these societies, or most of them, must be increasing in numbers." The fact is that by unwise haste a society may be urged on in such a way that a reaction is essential to its health; or, again, the defects of its minister may for years retard it.

It is to be remembered, also, when speaking of our societies, that they have for the most part untrained ministers, while the other religious bodies have ministers well trained and skilful. Moreover, in some quarters the adverse influences of superior wealth and social standing are so strong as almost to overwhelm the love of truth for its own sake, and to force our people into a position which is far from being that of a city set on a hill. In Europe this is fully to be allowed for. In Italy, for instance, there is not a single society, although the heavenly doctrines have been extensively made known, and are read and loved by many. Without being called on to endorse the great caution observed by our Italian brother, we may admit that to judge that, because there was no society in Italy, there was nothing of the New Church, would be unjust.

In Switzerland the proposal to form separate societies was met by some with consternation, and, when they found that Pastor Göerwitz and the Lady von Struve and other devoted ones, would not be held back from raising openly the standard of the New Church, they left them to do it alone. Here again the societies represent the whole movement only in part. It is so in Germany, where the only considerable number is at Berlin, and there the leader is so much of a mystic that, for this reason as well as for others, the society is not representative. In England during the last year there has been a gain of about four hundred members, but the report is that thirty societies increased and twenty-eight societies decreased. This decrease will be found, if examined, to depend on ministerial inefficiency and other temporary causes. In France the formation of a religious society out of the previous philosophical society has caused a sad defection.

In Denmark the result of looking solely to a society is seen most plainly, because, on account of lack of means, the leader has no periodical and is doing no translating. He therefore simply preaches to a small number, now in an unsuitable room; then in a hired church which is bought by somebody and closed to him; then in a third place, thus drifting about in a large city, all the time losing members through emigration and other causes, and noting with great regret that the publication of the truth is limited to his own voice which increasing age may soon silence. Denmark is thus an extreme case; but it illustrates what I would deprecate, the dependance mainly upon societies in this stage of our movement. The society in Copenhagen should be cherished, but the whole Danish people everywhere should be furnished with our literature. Otherwise in effect the candle is lighted and put under a bushel.

This reference to the societies may be enough to show that, if we keep our minds exclusively upon them, we shall be filled with anxiety, and perhaps be thereby rendered incapable of feeling the joy of the New Church, of preaching and telling its most uplifting truths, and of giving to our congregations or our friends good tidings of great joy. A discouraged New Churchman, whom the promises cannot effect, is like a log so wet that it will not float or a fire so feeble that it cannot warm one.

What, then, are signs of growth which can be viewed as first in order of time, as those especially to be noted in order to counteract the anxiety which the societies may cause us through human imperfections? The publication of our truths has been so blessed that, when we contemplate it, we can only rejoice. And on this everything depends. The books by which the interior truths of the Holy Word, containing the principles of the New Church are taught to mankind, have met already with a remarkable spread. In their original Latin all have been reproduced, including some of those which Swedenborg did not intend to publish. English translations have been made over and over with lavish expenditure of time and money. Besides these, there are Swedish and

Danish and German and French and Italian translations, with some others, and they are steadily increased and gradually brought into use.

Nor would I overlook the other literature of books and periodicals which form outer circles about the central light of Swedenborg's own works, written under the guidance of the Lord. All these under whatever name have their place. The expense of the periodicals is sometimes deprecated, and no one ever heard of a bequest being made to endow one, but it is possible that they are doing a large service, so far as they apply the truth to questions of the day, and bring out timely lessons from the Word.

Another striking evidence of the growth of the New Church is the formation of training schools for the ministry. Without these, little influence can be exerted by our preachers upon cultured people. There are two schools in England, neither having sufficient numbers to form regular classes, but both aiming to help forward the preacher's use. There are two in this country, of neither of which would it become me to speak critically. But I may say of the one maintained by the General Convention that it endeavors to do all it can do, that its instructors are conscious of their great responsibility, and that they hope to see the institution improve in all its work. It cannot be denied that we now have a training school, of fair standing, constantly looked to for ministers, and well represented by its students now occupying the pulpits in Portland, Boston Highlands, Providence, New York, Detroit, Chicago, and other cities and towns.

There is a constant source of grateful satisfaction in the fact that some of our most vital uses are to a degree endowed, so that we are not checked at every turn by the need of collecting funds, which can only be received after some delay. In regard to the use of money it may be remarked that the completion of the work of photo-lithographing the manuscripts at Stockholm can be reached within two or three years, and that it is conceivable that so acceptable a translation may be produced by the Rotch Fund as to lead to a suspension for some time of the lavish and constant expenditures made by our

people on this account. We begin to see the end of these demands as well as of that involved in the republication of the Latin, and may turn to think of other uses more freely, especially to missions.

A cause of rejoicing, not much felt by us if we are accustomed to severely condemn those who are slow to receive the truths of the New Age, is found in the notably kind recognition of our Christian standing. While suspicion and defamation ran everywhere, little could be done. To this has now succeeded a much more just estimate, which is well illustrated by a remark of a recent Boston paper:

> The "New Church" views have drawn together a few refined congregations; they produce a spiritual character; their tendency is all for good; but to the student of the times and their problems, Swedenborg is not intellectually the leader; he is out of touch with the predominant methods; his claims are arbitrary and his reasonings fanciful; the Bible requires a treatment less mystical and more philosophical.

This mild commendation is in great contrast with views expressed in the past. The concluding words seem to me to indicate, not a condemnatory spirit, but ignorance of our doctrines from no actual reading and a feeling received from noting that our people have generally little to do with public questions and little part in public meetings. If there be a deficiency here we should feel grateful to the critic who points it out, even if he lays on the doctrines the blame which should rest on the people.

These considerations of a pleasant character may be called the wings of our movement. The more we consider the great spread of our literature, the development of our institutions, the kindly spirit felt for us, and the prosperity of our societies, where conditions inward and outward are favorable, the more do we enter into the joy of the New Church, and the more do we feel impelled to press onward and upward, to mount up with wings as eagles, that is, to ascend into the light of heaven and its intelligence in spiritual things.

But no one can deny that there are also fetters to be con-

fessed. The mood of the world, either running after mere superstitions in place of rational convictions, or turning in skepticism to paths of indulgence, is a great hinderance. There are also causes incidental to the development of a new country which interfere with the reception of spiritual truth through leading men to abandon every pursuit for that of wealth. There are a thousand things which excite the natural man to the injury of the spiritual. These are so well known as to need no enumeration.

In proceeding at once to speak briefly of our fetters or of causes of delay and discouragement for which we are responsible, let me disclaim the disposition to indulge in mere criticism, and let me impartially divide my remarks between clergy and laity. This branch of the subject is very difficult ground, because one is so apt to believe that, with some change made as recommended by him, all prosperity will follow. This is not reasonable, and is so far to be avoided that I would speak only with a view to pointing out some undoubted defects which, being such, are properly reckoned as fetters upon us.

The ideal minister of the New Church should be, it seems to me, so versed in the literal and spiritual meaning of Scripture as to give evidence that he is at home in it, so well instructed in the principles of correspondence and representation that he is constantly bringing out their hid treasures, and so intensely Scriptural in his preaching that every hearer brings away an important addition to his store of Bible knowledge, to be converted by application to life into spiritual wisdom.

If, on the other hand, it be a fact that our ministers are, generally speaking, Bible students only so far as immediate preparation for the pulpit requires it, if they be ignorant of the best products of study into the literal meaning, if they know the spiritual sense only in detached portions as they have studied it on occasion, if they hold few or no classes for the benefit of their people in the knowledge of the Word, if they give to such classes as they do hold a dogmatic or philosophical rather than a Scriptural tone, if by holding too

limited a number of services, or otherwise, they give to their people less opportunity for religious learning than is given by ministers of other bodies to their people, if the sermons which they preach are either so near the level of ordinary preaching elsewhere, or so argumentative as not to be expository of the deeper meaning of Scripture, then I would hold that we are not availing ourselves of the true power of the New-Church pulpit, and are likely to be deficient in the best success.

It is noticeable that our ministers stand well in their communities, and that serious cases of unworthiness among them are almost unknown; but it is, perhaps, equally noticeable that they are winning their good reputation on other grounds than those of actual power in preaching, or other public address, whether that power be derived from deep insight into Scripture or from close contact with the affairs of their communities.

A little example of hiding the light is found in the papers which announce each week the subjects, often very worldly and objectionable ones, on which other preachers will discourse, while our ministers, here and there, if they announce anything, merely say that a single service will be held, and give no subject, when their subjects would be seen, if announced, to be truly spiritual. Another more important example is furnished by looking at our weekly newspaper, to which so few of our ministers contribute anything, that it depends largely on the productions of good men and women who are in need of payment and who may do so little study or may live so isolated as to do less forcible work than the paper demands, if it is to go out widely representing our best thought.

To this defect of study and leadership thereby on the part of our ministers, speaking generally and including critic as well as the criticized, let me add the habit of some to lay a wrong emphasis in their teaching. This is illustrated by any who have become so anxious over the question of true communion wine as to preach on it and talk on it as their principal theme. One may have no more respect for the various

imitations of wine, turning foul as soon as tested by being exposed to the air, than for any other imitations, but obviously it will not do to have controversy about them or to stand out against them in such a way as to make the question a stone of stumbling. It is better that those communicants who may desire should receive what others can scarcely call wine than that there should be the least pause in the onward and united growth of a society. So of any similar subject.

All emphasis laid in preaching or elsewhere on such subjects is misplaced, and tends to check growth most seriously. Any subject which receives a wrong emphasis, and is for the time a hobby, does great injury, weakening the confidence of people in their minister, and leading them to stray away to any other who simply preaches the Lord, and whose devotedness is proof against the temptation to put emphasis on matters not vital to religion. Especially in England, with some noble exceptions, our brethren seem to have been carried away by the spirit of controversy over wine, and before that the ministry was a subject much discussed. It matters not what the subject is, such controversy is harmful, and is a bar to the progress of the spiritual life.

Without getting into controversies, ministers may be so punctilious about dress or ritual that they lose the full respect of their more intelligent people; or they may be so nice in regard to abstruse points of doctrine that their people, in seeking after these narrow paths, leave the broader ones of practical Christian usefulness.

The general idea is that everything of littleness is a fetter, that our progress is hindered by anything in the ministry which friendly men regret to see and which they do not tolerate in themselves. There can be nothing in the minister which people must put up with because they see it to be a fault, though he does not so regard it, without its jeopardizing for a time the development of his society.

Nor do our lay people fail to furnish some causes of delay, some fetters, and there can be no unkindness in saying that worldliness is such a cause. The number of people who do not go to church because they wish to use the money otherwise and less worthily is enormous. This is so at large, and

to a degree among ourselves. Ministers are sometimes blamed because people are not in the churches on Sunday. If the seductions of tobacco and the unwillingness to spend any money on a church could be taken away, the churches would be thronged. We seem to be working backwards over the steps indicated by the seals and horses in the Book of Revelation. We have regained spiritual liberty, have had the souls freed that were imprisoned, and have so arrived at the stage of the pale horse whose rider is Death. Some have passed that stage of decay, and the church is reviving among men, but now comes the time of the black horse, and of truth and good being held in light estimation. We have probably not reached as yet the controversial stage represented by the red horse, and may yet have the closest conflict ever seen between truth and error; not a sectarian battle, but one between Christian truth on the one hand and specious inventions or atheistic denials on the other. But now men strive after scientific truth, and scorn spiritual truth. "A measure of wheat for a penny and three measures of barley for a penny," is the saying of the man of the world today.

There is another trouble with the laity, in that, even in the church, they seek after what is worldly, — numbers and wealth, amusements, highly-colored rituals, — and love controversies instead of the humble though joyful service of praise, the truth of God, the consecration of the heart, the seeking for other souls.

These are some of our fetters, and in the Divine purposes and the holy promises and our modest achievements are the wings. The Lord is on the side of those who would use the wings against the fetters. He does not value gloom, complaint, surrender. He asks for devotion, hope, the enduring trust, the charity that beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, and which, in spite of every obstacle, never faileth.

It may be that, at some future time, looking back over the history of our movement in its specific form, we shall see that it must emerge from its first secluded, somewhat persecuted, yet on the whole deeply enjoyed stage, and come forth into the world, and meet the great problems faced by others, and

do battle in their sight, before its worthiness to hold the spiritual leadership could be acknowledged. It may be that in order to do this, to go as did David against Goliath, it must first successfully contend with some dangers peculiar to itself, as David fought with the lion and the bear and overcame them. That marvellously efficient little body, the Moravians, with less than thirty thousand members at home and over eighty thousand members in Greenland, South America, Africa, and the remainder of their fifteen foreign missions, has passed through, its leaders say, three great periods of temptation; first from self-satisfaction over conspicuous superiority of zeal, then from increase of wealth leading to worldliness, and finally from skepticism. We may need to go through similar trials looking to larger usefulness.

Let no man surrender to an enemy only sent to prove him. Naaman the general came to find the delight of health at the hands of the prophet. The prophet did not bow down before him, but bade him go and wash in Jordan. Naaman was angry. He expected to be honored, to have Elisha feel honored by the visit. He had not prepared himself for this. He would not stoop to muddy Jordan, when Abana and Pharpar ran crystal clear by his own palace. So it is with us all. We come to be helped, to receive the glorious gifts of the New Age, and lo, we must go down to Jordan, beginning a new dutifulness, a new self-sacrifice, a new consecration. We will not go, we say, the streams of the old religion are better. Our faith fails us when humiliation for the truth's sake is demanded. But it is well to go down to Jordan and be bathed seven times. This New Church, which requires so much and so humiliates us, is worth the effort. If we but do what is bidden, our flesh will be restored as the flesh of a little child. Let us, then, permit no obstacles to stay our steps; let us lead the way to Jordan, full of hope inspired by the promises; then we may be able to bring others down to the river of God in order that they may go up healed, even till the face of the world shall be changed, and men shall have the joy of the victorious Lord fulfilled in themselves.

Bridgewater, Mass. T. F. Wright.

SOME THOUGHTS ON ROBERT ELSMERE.

So much has been written about this book, that the attempt to say anything new on the subject may seem almost hopeless. Nevertheless, the interest excited by it is far from having subsided. Inquiries are constantly coming from fresh readers as to the way in which the book should be interpreted, the effects which it is likely to produce, and the place which should be given it in literature; so that every honest attempt to throw light on the subject may still possess a certain value, in consideration of the fact that it must needs be differently treated by each critic from his own individual point of view.

The excitement caused by the book is in itself a striking phenomenon. Although the work is in the form of fiction, it deals with the profoundest questions of religion and theology; and it is in these that the ferment of discussion centres. That so much interest should be awakened in the experience of a man cutting loose from ecclesiastical traditions, and seeking the freedom of a more rational faith, is a suggestive sign of the times. Such experience, surely, would not gain attention from so wide a circle of readers, unless in their hearts they felt a degree of sympathy with it. The great intellectual power of the book, and the fact that it has called forth criticisms from leading writers, among both clergy and laity, are not enough to account for the extraordinary reception it has met with. There can be little doubt that Elsmere's history voices thoughts which are agitating many minds, however much or little they may agree with the conclusions at which he finally arrives.

The outlines of the story are so well known that I shall attempt to rehearse them with exceeding brevity. Robert Elsmere is first presented as a young man fresh from the university about to enter the ministry of the Church of England. His Oxford associations and training have not tended to fit him especially for a clerical career; but of this he is unaware, and a certain moral enthusiasm, which is his

most striking characteristic, impels him toward the church as the field best suited to his tastes and temperament. Foremost among the influences by which he is affected at college are two friends — both of them older than himself — Langham, refined, fastidious, skeptical, — and Grey, a venerated teacher and lecturer, strong in intellect, noble in character, full of sympathy for the aspirations of youth, yet one who has broken with the popular Christianity, and for whom, in the words of the author, "God, consciousness, duty, were the only realities."

These friendships, however, did not visibly disturb Elsmere's orthodoxy. So we find him, at the beginning of the story, filled with ardor for his chosen profession, and awaiting his recovery from a severe illness before assuming the charge of a country parish. At this time he meets the lady who becomes his wife. She is a devoted member of the church, active in its charities, self-denying, and unsparing of herself — almost to the verge of asceticism. With much that is gentle and lovely about her, she is in all that concerns her religious belief rigid and austere. From the first, there is more or less friction between Elsmere's greater liberality of sentiment and her inflexible adhesion to the established order of things.

Nevertheless, Robert and Catherine enter zealously and happily upon their parish work. The field which opens before them affords ample scope for their utmost energy and devotion. Outside the ordinary routine of ministerial life, their hands are full of efforts to ameliorate the condition of the poor and ignorant. Plans for better drainage, cleanlier homes, evening-schools, reading-rooms, museums, and libraries, in all of which his wife warmly seconds him, engage the attention of the young rector. For a while all goes well; and a long career of usefulness, crowned with visible results, seems to have been assured.

But now a new personage appears upon the scene. Roger Wendover, the squire, and chief land-owner of the village, a profound student, a learned writer, possessor of a splendid library, self-contained, cold, critical, unbelieving, gains by degrees, and yet without deliberate purpose, an ascendency

over the mind of Elsmere. The bond between them is purely intellectual. The squire's cool indifference to all moral questions does not, in the least, quench Robert's earnestness. But his wealth of knowledge, his power of reasoning, his perfect familiarity with all the scientific and other arguments which are used to discredit Christianity, reinforced by the unlimited treasures of his book-shelves, gradually have the effect of weakening Elsmere's faith; or, rather, of showing him that he has no faith which rests on sure foundations.

Then follows a period of severe internal struggles, ending in the decision on Elsmere's part, that the only honorable thing for him to do is to resign his living. This he does, in spite even of the squire's remonstrances, who sees no occasion for relinquishing a position of worldly usefulness on account of a changed belief. The scenes between Robert and Catherine at this juncture are extremely vivid and painful. She clings as tenaciously as ever to the old creeds and formulas, viewing all contrary opinions with undisguised abhorrence, hoping continually against hope that her husband will finally be brought back to the one true fold. This attitude she maintains persistently to the last, although the bulwarks of her opposition one by one give way to the strength of his moral convictions, so far as to win her acquiescence, and, to some extent, even her coöperation, in his new schemes. The ties between them are sadly strained, but not broken. Notwithstanding much unhappiness, their mutual love and esteem are never lost; and the position, at first so difficult, becomes more and more tolerable on both sides.

After relinquishing his parish, Elsmere goes to London, and plunges heart and soul into work for the uncultured classes. Night-schools, clubs, lectures, and finally a religious society, or brotherhood, are the result of his efforts. He finds, or claims to find, that among the London artisans the established forms of religion have but little influence. "Eight hundred thousand people in South London, of whom the enormous proportion belong to the working classes, and among them Church and Dissent nowhere — *Christianity not in possession.*" On the basis afforded by this estimate he proceeds

to act. He attempts to meet them with a belief which they can accept. His success, as described in the story, is wonderful. He becomes in the district where he labors a great power for good. But his enthusiasm outruns his strength. After a brief period of activity he breaks down from overwork; and with his premature but happy death the book closes.

In the foregoing sketch no mention has been made of many subordinate persons and incidents which add to the interest of the tale. But enough has been said to show its main drift, and to suggest the most important points for our consideration. We are left in no doubt as to the theological platform on which Elsmere finally stands. It is unquestionably that of the authoress herself, even as he is, presumably, her ideal hero. "God, consciousness, duty" are to him the only realities, as they were to his old mentor, Grey. In his view the Lord Jesus Christ is merely a man — the best of men, it is true, whose life is "wrought ineffaceably into the higher civilization of Europe," and who is rightly taken for a guide, inspiration, and example, but who is nevertheless to be loved as human, not worshipped as Divine. "Miracles do not happen." They are simply the legends with which "the ignorant love of his first followers wreathed the life" of Jesus. They served a good purpose in the early days of Christianity, but the time for their usefulness is gone. They must be cleared away. We must "go back to the roots of things, reconceive the Christ, bring him afresh into our lives, make the life so freely given for man minister again in new ways to man's new needs. "We may now discern the true features of Jesus of Nazareth, as no generation but our own has been able to discern them since those who had seen and handled passed away."

With many impassioned utterances Elsmere endeavors to set before his audiences his reconception of the Christ, at the same time earnestly rebuking the spirit of contempt and irreverence. He says, "Let me try, however feebly, and draw it afresh for you, that life of lives, that story of stories, as the labor of our own age in particular has freshly revealed

it to us. Come back with me through the centuries; let us try and see the Christ of Galilee and the Christ of Jerusalem as he was before a credulous love and Jewish tradition and Greek subtlety had at once dimmed and glorified the truth." Thus he plants himself on the platform of belief in God, boundless admiration of the man Jesus, and a distinct repudiation of the literal sense of Scripture, so far, at least, as concerns all that is supernatural in it.

The question is often asked whether the book is likely to be injurious, and, if so, to what extent, in unsettling the faith its readers. My answer is, that in proportion as one's faith is settled, there is little in the book to disturb it. Still further, I doubt if those who are without any definite religious convictions will be greatly influenced by Elsmere's reasoning, unless their own thoughts already run in similar channels. Rationalism and scepticism, as such, are not made attractive. As impersonated by Langham, the Squire, Madame de Netteville, and others, they are to the last degree cheerless and forbidding. Catherine's rigid conformity is felt to be infinitely preferable. Those, however, who find in Robert's creed the echo of their own tendencies of thought and feeling, will doubtless be confirmed therein by his experience.

Other questions possessing, as it seems to me, much greater interest are these: How far is the Christian world revolving the problems of Robert Elsmere? How far is it dissatisfied with the solutions offered by the old systems of theology? In what way are existing wants to be met?

To the first question I would respond with the answer already given. It is quite incredible that the book should have awakened such a deep and wide interest unless it deals with matters that lie near to the minds and lives of men. "The battle of belief" viewed objectively, as the experience of an isolated person, is of small account; but if it is a battle which many other people are fighting, we can easily understand how it should make them feel akin to Elsmere, and stir their sympathy. The assertions made by the author, and apparently supported by strong evidence, as to the multitudes of people in England who are all adrift with regard to the

essential doctrines of Christianity, are plainly corroborated by the reception given to her book.

What is said in reply to the first question contains at least part of the answer to the second. If the old systems of theology were sufficient for our modern exigencies, there would be no such wide-spread doubt and unbelief, no such eager greeting of a work like "Robert Elsmere." Mr. Gladstone's objection that Elsmere made no fight for his faith seems to me well met by Rev. L. P. Mercer, when he says that he had no faith of his own to fight for. Mrs. Ward's intention was obviously to present him as the type of a large class which accepts the church and its traditions as the established order of things, under which one must live as a matter of course without asking why. He had no grounds of belief to begin with. He was simply a member of that great ecclesiastical establishment, which, by its alliance with the state, its complete organization, its historical prestige, its splendid churches and impressive ritual, naturally gathers to itself, in England at least, all neutral souls that see no occasion for going elsewhere. As soon as he began to think for himself he found, or believed he found, that the church could not help him. And the same would have been equally true of any other body known as evangelical.

The difficulties which he encountered have been already hinted at in the foregoing brief synopsis. They were such as necessarily arise when any one seriously asks himself why he professes to believe in the authority of Scripture, the Divinity of Christ, and the vicarious atonement. He is not satisfied with being told that these doctrines are the teachings of the church, and have been handed down from former generations. He wishes to see in his mind, and to feel in his heart, that they are true. He is obliged to confess that the Bible apparently contains much that seems inconsistent with the idea of its Divine inspiration, much that is obsolete and therefore valueless, much that cannot be reconciled with God's infinite goodness and wisdom. The mystery of the Godhead, as it is explained to him, likewise seems unintelligible. His soul cries out for something more than a historic Christ resting His

claim on miracles, for some other scheme of salvation than that which necessitates belief in vicarious suffering.

That Elsmere failed to solve these difficulties in any satisfactory manner every New-Churchman knows. To interpret the Scriptures by rejecting their plainest teachings — to understand the Lord Jesus by robbing Him of His Divinity — is indeed to make a costly sacrifice on the altar of so-called reason. And yet we may rightly sympathize with His strivings after the light. If he represents a crying want of the age, we shall do well to consider what that want is, and to treat it with all kindness and gentleness.

As I interpret Robert Elsmere's difficulties they are such as arise from the feeling that belief in the Lord Jesus Christ as God makes Him of necessity a far-off, mystical being, whose work was finished long ago, and who bears no perceptible relation to the life of today. There is an intense yearning to be able to regard Him as near and human, not merely as exalted and Divine. The old theology seems to exclude Him practically from participation in the living interests of mankind, by making salvation wholly dependent on our mental attitude with respect to bygone events and circumstances. In seeking to bring Him within the range of our present states and experiences, Elsmere deems it necessary to divest Him of all superhuman qualities. He sees no middle ground between one who is entirely Divine and one who is entirely human, and so he accepts the latter alternative.

Truly this is the expression of a legitimate need; nor is it strange that men run into all sorts of false and contradictory opinions in trying to satisfy it. So far as they are honest seekers after truth they deserve only respect and sympathy. As New-Churchmen, we should never cease to proclaim the answer which we have received to their perplexing questions, namely, that Jesus Christ, though Divine, is also human, and that, by virtue of His Divine Humanity, embodying all the fulness of Deity, He is the present Helper of those who love Him and keep His commandments. To be assured of this truth, and to see it stated and confirmed throughout the Scriptures, is in a genuine sense to have a new and living revelation of Him.

If, then, Elsmere and his like could but know that the Lord is thus freshly revealed, would they not have an all-sufficient answer to their doubts and yearnings? The historic figure at Bethlehem, at Nazareth, and by the Sea of Galilee, in the garden, on the cross, and in the sepulchre, is as real as any personage who ever lived, and all that the Scriptures say about Him is true. No abatement is to be made from the story of His birth, of His life, and of His glorious resurrection. He was, in very truth, Immanuel, God with us. But this is not all. Our connection with Him is not that of mere history. We are not called upon to believe merely in certain facts about Him, or in a certain dogmatic explanation of those facts. But He has come. He is here. We may touch the hem of His garment, and clasp His beautiful feet. He is revealed to us in His opened Word, which declares Him everywhere present, God in His Divine Humanity. To believe in, to love, and to obey Him, is the sum of all duty, the essence of all religion. To read the Scriptures, seeing His face and hearing His voice in all their utterances, is to have Him for our near and living Lord. Were it not for this new relationship which He has established, we too might rebel against the letter of Divine revelation as something that killeth; to us an ancient, wonder-working Christ might seem far off from our present life — we, too, might crave something nearer and more human than the second person of a Divine Trinity. I do not say that Mrs. Humphrey Ward, or Christian people generally, are as yet ready for this doctrine. But it is very plain that their confusion and difficulties will keep on continually increasing till they find it.

As for those who call themselves by the name of the New Church, their success and influence will surely be measured by the degree in which the Lord's second advent is a reality to them, not merely as a dogma to be affirmed and defended, but as the most potential fact of daily life, binding them more and more closely to Him who is their ever-present God and Saviour.

Boston, Mass. JAMES REED.

THE ORGANIZING POWER OF CHRISTIANITY.

HAVE we ever thought why it was that in establishing Christianity as an institution among men, the Lord had so little to say about rules and regulations and modes of organization? To be sure there are rules, although they refer almost wholly to the regulation of Christian conduct; but even these do not come to us with the usual formality of a fixed code. The nearest approach to it is the Sermon on the Mount; and yet the spirit of that sermon is as free as the mountain airs amid which it was spoken. Many of the truths by which Christians live lie scattered throughout the Lord's recorded conversations. Some of the profoundest and sublimest of them seem quite accidental, as if dependent upon the special incidents which called forth their utterance. Take it where He says, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." As a truth there can be nothing more wonderful and weighty than this, and on it millions bereaved by death have sought comfort; and yet, apparently, we are indebted for it to Martha's obscure thought concerning the resurrection of her brother Lazarus. The day when the Lord drew a little child towards Him, and dethroned pride and coronated humility, by saying, "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven"—that was a time when the disciples were disputing among themselves which should be greatest. And so of many another truth. Little way-side words of comfort or of counsel they must have seemed to the disciples, until the spirit of God searched their memories, after all things had been accomplished, and brought them back to remembrance, that they might be written down for the consolation and guidance of future generations.

And yet by this we do not mean that the truth was really given accidentally, or that the Lord taught without a clearly defined purpose, or that Christianity is a mere miscellany of remembered words and doctrines. Why, then, this appear-

ance? Or, to put the question differently, What was it that the Lord depended on for the establishment and perpetuity of the Christian religion? The Jews had the Ten Commandments engraved on tables of stone. In addition to this they had rule after rule regulating their conduct, their worship, their dress, their very food. But with Christianity all this is changed. There is a notable absence of what one might call the machinery of religion. Sum it all up, and what, visibly, did the Lord do in direct preparation for the establishment of the new religion?

1. He gathered about Him twelve men whom he called apostles.

2. These, through the daily influence of His companionship and by His conversations, He gradually prepared to become His messengers.

3. He instituted Christian baptism and the Holy Supper as the two great sacraments of this new religion, and commanded their observance.

4. At His ascension He commissioned the apostles to go forth and make disciples everywhere, a work, however, which they were not to undertake until they felt the touch of the Holy Spirit, and could go forth in the consciousness of a power higher than their own.

And yet in all this there is nothing said about the form into which the church must be organized; nothing about its officers, whether deacons, presbyters, or bishops. Only once does His language seem to have any direct bearing on such things, and that is where He says, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church" — words which the early Christians, many of them, rightly considered to have reference to Peter's declaration of faith, and not Peter as a man. And this almost studied silence on these formal matters, concerning which there has been so much strife, was clearly, it would seem, because the young church was to be left without trammels of any kind; that what might be best for one branch of it might not be best for another; that what might prove helpful in one age might be a hindrance in another; and that always the church must be left free to organize itself and

carry on its work in the manner best suited to it. "When thou wast young," the Lord said to Peter, addressing him for the last time, "thou girdedst thyself and walkedst whither thou wouldest." And so it was with the church. Its life was young, its thoughts new, its affections untried; and the Lord gave it the freedom of its youth to gird itself as it would.

And yet think what the Lord was intending all the time, though He said so little about the formal part of the work — the establishment of the Christian religion with all that that implies. The old kingdoms were passing away, and the new was coming in. "Now is the judgment of this world," He exclaimed; "now shall the prince of this world be cast out." "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." To him it was all clear. Judaism was withering away like the barren fig tree. Rome with its sensual life was doomed, though in its brute strength it retained the appearance of power. The Greeks were worshipping at an altar dedicated "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD," and scoffed at the Tarsus Jew when he told them of the resurrection. But a new kingdom was coming on, though the priests shrieked "Blasphemy!" and Rome plunged a spear into the side of its Founder. He could feel the first faint throbbings of its young life. He knew more fully than the prophet who wrote the words, that "of the increase of His government and peace there should be no end." And yet He was passing away, and seemingly without making provision for the fulfilment of this more than vision. The Gospels had not been written; not a church established. Twelve men, without a written credential among them, waiting for the promised gift of the Holy Ghost — the world's doors closed against them. And yet in the mind of its Founder, the establishment of this new kingdom as much a certainty, as inevitable, as if it already lay shining white under His eye, and the mighty deserts of the world were already blossoming as the rose, and springs of water bubbling in every thirsty land.

And yet we, with any new undertaking, look almost wholly to organization. "This which we are about to do," we say,

"will take money. We must organize thoroughly. We must have officers, and a constitution." And if organization alone were sufficient for the salvation of men, what could withstand the power of the Christian Church today? When we look from Palestine, where Peter and James and John and their fellow-workers are setting forth to do their bidden work, without money, without a mass-book, not a pulpit they could call their own, not a temple to flee to but "God and the Lamb"; when we look from that to the church today, officered and marshaled as it is, rich, educated, resting in the midst of a civilization which is the proudest and the fairest that the world has seen, how great is the contrast!

What, then, did the Lord depend upon as even more necessary — for we do not deny its necessity — than the most perfect organization? Or rather what was the particular power which He depended on and sought to create to make the truth which He brought to men and the love He revealed to them operative, and, so to speak, contagious, so that they should spread from mind to mind, from heart to heart? To give a general answer, and put it in a single word, it was the power of *enthusiasm!*

And yet we realize that we have here introduced a term which, when associated with religion, seems not without danger. The worshippers of Baal, it will be said, had enthusiasm as they leaped upon their burning altar and gashed themselves with stones. The perpetrators of the massacre of St. Bartholomew had enthusiasm. John, the apostle, was he not moved by enthusiasm when he came to the Master and asked that he might invoke the lightning to shatter the dwellings of the inhospitable Samaritans? And yet clearly the zeal of the Lord of Hosts had nothing of this fiery quality in it. Nothing impetuous or frenzied in the enthusiasm of the Son of Man. And if this seems a strange term to apply to Jesus of Nazareth, in whom there is no trace of nervous excitability, but rather of calmness and patience, let us remember that this word originally means "*in God.*"

One may have enthusiasm and not utter a word. He may have enthusiasm and yet never be seen rushing to and

fro in excited activity. But to feel that a cause is in God; to move forward in it confident in its final triumph; to meet obstacle and ridicule, and suffering with that same strong confidence, and not slacken in the effort, — that not only implies enthusiasm, but enthusiasm of the very highest kind. And it is just this which we see throughout the Lord's life; always going forward in the work which He said He had come to do; never faltering, though enemies misjudged, and friends misunderstood, and what He did and said seemed so often to be without avail.

And what was the special form or quality of this Divine enthusiasm? It was, to use an expression which is becoming familiar, "the enthusiasm for humanity." "Behold my mother and my brethren," He said one day, stretching forth His hand over the little company that had gathered about Him. How simple and yet how wonderful that declaration! It was a listening, teachable humanity that He loved. It was for humanity, marred and disfigured as it was, that He was living. Nor did this Divine enthusiasm spring from anything which the natural eye would see. Nothing engaging in the sight of that poor, ignorant company. Doubtless, there was many a hard, evil face peering out at Him, many a sad face and faces dejected and sullen. But it was looking up to Him, and He would own it with all its scars. He would stretch His hand above it. "My mother! My brethren!"

And whence this enthusiasm for humanity?

First, From the desire of doing good, of giving life, of blessing, of saving, which is a Divine desire, and must find an object to whom it may minister.

Second, The recognition of man as an immortal being with spiritual possibilities for good, born into the world that he might become the son of God by the expansion and elevation of all his wondrous, ay, his God-like faculties.

These two things, then, the reaching out to others to help and bless, which is the very quality of the Divine Love, and the recognition of man's spiritual possibilities — these were at the bottom of that enthusiasm for humanity which the Lord had in all its fulness, and which He tried to

impart to others. At every step we feel it. Man is to be helped, rescued, elevated. The Shepherd must go forth in search of the stray sheep. The Son of Man must lay down His life for His friends. And then what was the actual example of His life? Always living for others, was it not? And no one so poor or so mean but He was willing to be of service. Would the Jews stone the woman in adultery? He sees the possibilities of a pure womanhood beneath the soiled image, and says, "Go, sin no more." Do they sneer at the little tax-gatherer of Jericho? Divine eyes have looked upon the struggles of his heart, and He passes under the publican's roof with the words, "This day is salvation come to this house."

Always this enthusiasm for humanity, man's need of help, the possibility of improvement, and the great privilege of service. "I am among you as one that serveth." Down on His knees the Lord of those men was willing to go, washing the dust from their feet, that they might ever remember that it was a Divine thing to minister to the humblest of human wants. This is the enthusiasm the Lord tried to kindle in the minds of His disciples. To love Him was not sufficient. To die for Him, as Peter declared He would do, was not sufficient. Their love for Him would amount to but little, if it did not inspire them with this same enthusiasm for humanity. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." It seems as if this was the one great thing for them to learn, or rather to feel. It is urged upon them in every possible form. They are told even to love their enemies; to be good to those who hate them; to pray for those who persecute them. In fact, He tells them that all the law and the prophets are reducible to this one principle, of doing to others as they would be done by.

And now can we not see, that, given this enthusiasm, the establishment of Christianity follows as a consequence? The truth would be preserved, for truth is as inseparable from love as light is from heat. The church would be established, for love to God and man are the church. Therefore, the Lord said little about what we call "church order"; He did

little in the way of teaching what we call dogmatic theology; but He did everything that could be done to inspire men with two grand passions — a love for Him, and a love for humanity. "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." And in this twin passion, the church of today, and every Christian association of today, must rely for success. The life of our own body, which has been complained of by some of our own people, even, as cold and intellectual, depends upon it. The enthusiasm of a wise love — and love not merely for the members of our own societies, or for our own church, — but for humanity; the willingness to work for the good of others, not surely as a mere pastime, or simply at our convenience, but as a part, nay, as the very essence of the duty of our apostleship — that surely is something which we need in all its fulness.

The Lord came to open men's eyes to the real relationship that exists between them; to make life a truer and a nobler thing by bringing them into Christian fellowship; to inspire them with an enthusiasm for humanity. Not yet is the work done. The spirit of the Lord, let us believe, is still among us; seeking with endless patience to bring harmony where there is now division, justice where there is oppression, fraternity where there is now strife. Something of that spirit, if we are disciples, we too should have; sharing in the same work, and urged on by the same enthusiasm — the enthusiasm of humanity, to which is now to be added a love and acknowledgment of the Lord Jesus Christ in His Divine Humanity.

Roxbury, Mass. JULIAN K. SMYTH.

Is it possible to make those blessed who will turn away from the light, who do not care for spiritual things? "God will have all men to be saved," but He cannot accomplish their salvation as He would the growth of a tree, because He also wills that all men shall be free, so even goodness is not thrust upon them. — *Rev. Rufus Ellis.*

THE LORD'S GLORIFIED BODY.

It is said in the Gospel that the Lord at His resurrection left nothing of His body in the sepulchre. He Himself says, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." (Luke xxiv. 39.) Some have inferred from this last that He could be seen by material eyes, and perceived by other material senses after His resurrection.

Man's body dies and is dissolved; what are we to understand is the difference from this in the case of the Lord?

We know that the Lord Jesus Christ is God Himself. He is the Word Who in the beginning was with God, and was God, and was made flesh. He assumed humanity in fulness by being born of a human mother. And what He assumed He glorified, that is, by the appropriate process, made Divine. He had not only a human mind but also a human material body; and all that He assumed, including the material body, with only such change as must necessarily be, He made Divine. When the process was complete, when that had taken place which He meant by ascending to the Father, there was a Divine body on the plane of matter. There was a body entirely in union with Him, and an ultimate, an entire part of Him, Who is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. The body of the Lord, after His glorification, partook of these Divine attributes. "As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." (John v. 24.) It could not be otherwise than that whatever He Who is God assumed He would make Divine. As the body possessed Divine attributes, as it was united with and was a partaker of omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence, it was, of course, as it is in itself entirely above man's or angel's comprehension; but the Lord from His Divine mercy, before He had fully ascended to the Father, in order to give men the fullest possible knowledge of Him, for the end of promoting their union with Him, showed Himself to them by opening their spiritual senses in a form adapted to

their apprehension, retaining, at least temporarily, for the purpose of helping their faith, undeniable marks of His personality and of His continued existence.

Swedenborg says, A. C. 1729, —

> With the Lord all is Jehovah, not only His internal and interior man, but also His external man, and His very body; wherefore He is the only One Who rose up into heaven with His body also, as plainly appears in the Evangelists, speaking of His resurrection, and likewise from the Lord's own words: "Why do reasonings arise in your hearts? See My hands and My feet that it is I Myself; handle Me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have; and when He had this said, He showed them His hands and His feet." (LUKE xxiv. 38–40.)

See also A. C. 5078 at the end, and 3490.

When we see that the Lord fully glorified His humanity, that even on the plane of the flesh and bones it was made Divine, and thus participated in Divine attributes, among them of omnipresence, we can see outward evidence of this in the Gospels. Mary saw Him in the garden near Jerusalem (JOHN xx. 1); the two journeying to Emmaus, sixty furlongs from that city, saw Him on the way (LUKE xxiv. 15); He vanished out of their sight at Emmaus (verse 31). They saw Him again at Jerusalem (verse 36) the same day at evening on their return to that city, perhaps in company with the others in whose midst He stood, the doors being shut, as stated by John, chapter xx.

After the two manifestations described in this chapter, "Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias" (JOHN xxi. 1), which is some sixty miles north of Jerusalem, where, or near which, His previous showings of Himself to the disciples took place.

It might be inferred from the fact that the Lord walked with the two on their way to Emmaus, that He also walked back as the two did to Jerusalem; and that also He journeyed in one of the ordinary ways to the Sea of Galilee, on the shore of which He showed Himself to some of the disciples the morning after their night of unsuccessful fishing. But there is no account of the journeying to Jerusalem from

Emmaus, or from the former place to the Sea of Galilee, though before His crucifixion His journeyings are recorded. (See MATT. xx. 17–19; MARK x. 32; LUKE xviii. 31; JOHN xii. 12.) And if we admit the glorification of the humanity down to the plane of the flesh and bones, we see there is no occasion for outward journeyings from place to place. As He was omnipresent it was only necessary that the eyes should be opened anywhere to see Him; and it was only necessary for the eyes to be closed anywhere, and He would vanish out of sight. And with this view, with what force do the words of the Lord, uttered after His resurrection, come to us: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth; and, lo! I am with you alway unto the end of the world." (MATT. xxviii. 18, 20.)

In regard to the Lord eating material food after his resurrection, this is to be said: All that He did after this event in manifesting Himself, was to help to faith in Him. He knew what was necessary to secure this end best, and in His manifestations provided for it. Much of what He did appeals to the senses. Before fully ascending He caused Himself to be seen, and even the prints of the nails and of the effect of the spear. As a perfect evidence to them of His full humanity, He ate of a broiled fish and of an honeycomb — He even asked His disciples for it. (LUKE xxiv. 41.)

In order to appreciate this we must bear in mind that His body partook measurably of Divine attributes. As Divine, His body did not need to partake of food, because as Divine He was the source of all food. He appeared to His disciples to partake of food. There was nothing left of the food of which He appeared to partake, as there was nothing left of His body in the sepulchre. There was the full appearance to the disciples that this food was to Him what it was to them, because they did not yet know that His body had life in itself, and did not need the nourishment that their bodies did. We have no reason to doubt that the mere matter of the food He appeared to use as they did was dissipated as was the mere matter of His body when He was made Divine.

Abington, Mass. JOSEPH PETTEE.

OPEN LETTERS.

"MECHANICS AND FAITH."

Editor of the New-Jerusalem Magazine: —

I HAVE just finished reading the above book by Charles T. Porter. Considering the circumstances I do not remember having ever read one which appeared to me more remarkable. I know almost nothing of the author except his name and what I learn of him in the character of his work. I have however understood what indeed would be inferred from the style and manner of the book, that he is not acquainted, at least practically, with the writings of Swedenborg. His mind appears to be remarkably open, so much so that he sees with great clearness the personal Divine Being in nature and in the Bible. The wonder to me is that so much of what is in accord, and so distinctly in accord, with the Doctrine of the New Church should appear on almost every page. There is the appearance in nearly every chapter as if, without the direct aid of the doctrines, the holy city New Jerusalem were coming down from heaven.

In regard to one of the chapters an important qualification of this must be made. That the Divine Being is one of unmixed love comes out in much fulness everywhere in the book. But there is one work of Divine love, and that a very central and vital one, which the author does not recognize. If he had more carefully studied and considered nature, in which he sees delightedly a Divine revelation, he would have seen effects resulting from Divine love which escaped his notice. He does not seem to see, at least he does not recognize, evil things in nature — in plants, in animals, in the action of the elements producing tornadoes, earthquakes, etc. He does not bring to view the existence of this class of facts, and show in what mode of exercise of the Divine love these originate. He does not refer to the possibility of evil arising from the gift of freedom and reason to beings such as God from His love created — beings who should apparently have life in themselves. He does not in distinct form recognize that element of humanity, Divinely given, without which there could be no

being but God. Hence he does not see the possibility of hell, and of "evil things in nature originating together with hell." He has a chapter on "suffering." Here he says many things that are true in regard to its useful agency in leading men away from evil, and preparing them for union with God. But he does not in connection bring into view the fact that this reforming agency is exerted effectually, that is, internally, only in the case of those who are "drawn of the Father"; and he loses sight of those who, "not drawn of the Father," not hearing and learning of Him, would only be made worse by suffering.

If the writer of "Mechanics and Faith" had been aided in his work by a knowledge of the genuine doctrine of the church, this error doubtless would not have occurred. It must be said also that a knowledge and acknowledgment of this doctrine would have caused other modifications. But it is a cause not only of wonder, but also of profound thankfulness, that a book in such striking accord with the truth of the New Church, through such a medium, has been given to the world.

Abington, Mass. JOSEPH PETTEE.

SPIRIT AND MATTER.

Editor of the New-Jerusalem Magazine: —

WHEN the open letter of Mr. Denovan was read last night the Simple Soul, who had in part elicited it, rose at once to say that she was wrong about questioning the use of Mr. Denovan's article in November NEW-JERUSALEM MAGAZINE. If it had served no independent use it would clearly have shown its *raison d' être* in the responsive article on "The Idealism of Swedenborg," by Dr. Holcombe in January MAGAZINE. The use is still further manifested by this later and fuller exposition of Mr. Denovan's thought, which we beg leave to note as an advance on the previous expression.

The Simple Soul who has no love of disputations would now keep silent, except that she is troubled by Mr. Denovan's confessed failure to find in the philosophy of Swedenborg any teaching of the "absolute subjection of matter to spirit." Strange, is it not? But the Simple Soul finds this "subjection," the underlying principle of the whole grand system of spiritual laws from beginning to end. Nowhere has she discovered any mention or office of matter except as an expression, a covering, a correspondence to spirit,

which, whether embodied in the Infinite or finite being, is still the sole power of the universe. If, in so reading the illumined scribe, the Simple Soul betrays a darkness of understanding, will not some deeper student of the law be kind enough to indicate her mistake?

As for Christian Science, which in name and doctrine is yet an incoherent mouthing of a great spiritual principle, its "denial" is really but a subordination of matter, and it can offer, even under the distinguished advocacy of Dr. Holcombe, no obstruction to the interpretation of "the Secret of the Universe," which Mr. Denovan seeks in Swedenborg and hopes to see made manifest to "leading philosophic minds." Except in the subjectivity of matter to the interior and formative power of spirit, it does not appear that any philosophic mind will arrive at the secret of the universe through Swedenborg. This, however, is but the judgment of the Simple Soul, subject to change on clearer evidence. Which of us "by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?" asks our unbeliever in the finite, even when coöperative with infinite power.

The question may be the riddle of the sphinx, yet if he who quotes it has read as literally and as reverently the passages of Scripture that immediately precede and follow this pertinent inquiry, he must have learned that by taking no thought of his material life, but by seeking first of all the kingdom of God Who is a spirit, all these things which he needs shall be added unto him. Taken in its connection, the question appears as evidence of the power on the immaterial side in contra-distinction to the sensuous striving which, aiming at physical or natural good alone, misses it through non-recognition of the spiritual law on which matter is dependent.

A. L. M.

THE SALE OF JOSEPH.

Editor of the New-Jerusalem Magazine: —

Is it not possible to harmonize Swedenborg's statements in regard to the selling of Joseph with the evident fact that it was done at least at the instigation of his brethren and for their profit, by the supposition that as the Midianites passed by, the brethren showed them Joseph in the pit, and did not themselves pull him out, but permitted the Midianites to do so? This seems not unnatural in itself, and not inconsistent with the Bible account — which may read either way.

J. W.

SWEDENBORG STUDIES.

ANGELS KNOWING EARTHLY THINGS.

In Swedenborg Studies 108, we find the statement, —

> There were African spirits with me, from Abyssinia. Their ears were once opened to hear the singing in the world from a psalm of David; by which they were affected with such enjoyment that they, too, sang with those whom they heard.

To the general and obvious rule that the inhabitants of the natural world, having natural senses, perceive only natural objects, and that the inhabitants of the spiritual world, having spiritual senses, perceive only spiritual objects, this seems to be an exeeption, but it only proves the rule and illustrates the law. We know that the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles were sometimes permitted to see the objects of the spiritual world, but this was when they "were in the spirit," that is, in the use of their spiritual senses. Swedenborg was for many years conversant with the affairs of the spiritual world, but this was done by the opening of his spiritual senses, as is the case with one who dies; only Swedenborg remained in bodily life in order to do the duty laid upon him of telling men on earth the laws and phenomena of the spiritual world.

The reverse of this case is very rare. Those who have passed away from earth no longer have the natural organs of sense, and therefore, if they do see or hear what is done in this life, it must be done through the natural senses of some one still on the earth; moreover he must be also open to the spiritual world. And this explains the possibility of the passage quoted. These spirits were with Swedenborg, and undoubtedly listened through his ears to the holy sounds which so delighted them. Thus were their ears, which were closed to earthly sounds, "opened" by means of his ears.

We may note some passages which cover this point:

Spirits cannot, and still less can angels, see with their sight, that is, with that of their spirit, anything in this world. But, when it pleases the Lord, spirits and angels can see what is in this world through the eyes of a man. Through my eyes they have been permitted to see what is in this world, and as clearly as did I myself; also to hear men speaking with me. I have been instructed that the spirits and angels with other men do not see anything in the world, but only perceive the thoughts and affections of those with whom they are. (A. C. 1880.)

It is to be known that they who are in the other life can see nothing in the world through the eyes of any man; but they could see through mine because I was in the spirit with them and at the same time in the body with those who were in the world. (A. C. 4622.)

The spiritual see what is of spiritual origin, and the natural what is of natural origin. Man with his eyes can see nothing that is in the spiritual world unless it be granted him to be in the spirit. And again, angels and spirits can see nothing in the natural world unless they are with a man to whom it has been granted to speak with them. (H. H. 582.)

TRANSLATION OF ISAIAH LVIII. 13.

We have in this verse in the common version the familiar words, —

If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, holy unto the Lord, honorable.

The reader of A. C. 10,360 will be surprised to find this translation of Swedenborg's quotation, —

Call the Sabbath delights honorable to the Holy One of Jehovah.

In A. C. 85, however, where the Latin is essentially the same, the common version is used by our translators. A look at the Hebrew shows that the case is one in which, as Hebraists teach, the object of a verb is written with a preposition, and so is rendered in Latin by a dative, when the English should be in the objective. The revisers have said in their version, —

Call the Sabbath a delight (and) the holy of the Lord honorable.

This, however, will not translate the words as Swedenborg, with exact literalness, has written and interprets them in A. C. 10,360. We therefore prefer the rendering, —

Call the Sabbath a delight to the holy Jehovah, honorable.

We say "delight" for *delitiae*, and not "delights," because that is a word having no singular form, and so its plural is used for the singular. And we say, "the holy Jehovah," and not "the holy one of Jehovah," because we understand this to be the meaning.

In A. C. 8495 Swedenborg gives the common idea by using the words, —

Vocaveris sabbathum delicias sanctas Jehovae honorabiles.

This is not perfectly literal, but it shows that he did not essentially differ from the common version.

JACOB BOWING UPON THE BED.

THE way in which we have sometimes traced the progress of Swedenborg in the understanding of a passage of Scripture or of a minor point of doctrine has been unpleasant to some, because they have felt that before he published any theological treatise he had completed his work as a learner, and was afterwards a Divinely-prepared teacher. This he was, yet he is often letting us see that both the perception of a truth and the means of expressing it were increasing with him all the time. We note a point of such interest as to demand mention, in the interpretation of GEN. xlvii. 31, "And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head."

The notes upon the margin of the Bible say:

Submission: the bed is the lower part, like the footstool under the feet of the Messiah. The footstool is the world, and the bed is heaven.

In the notes written next afterwards, also wholly preparatory, Adv. II., 1090, we find, —

He bowed himself upon the bed's head involves more than at first sight appears. . . . It can be seen that the bed signifies the very footstool beneath the feet of God the Messiah. The bed or

footstool in man is that whereon the intellectual mind rests. It is the natural mind with its desires. . . . But so difficult of understanding are these things that I grieve over the changes of the times.

Here it will be noticed that the passage appeared dark, as compared with many which preceded. Its internal meaning was closely veiled by the letter.

In A. C. 6188 we have the passage treated in course, and it is explained that, —

> The bed is the natural, because the natural is below the rational and serves it as a bed, for the rational rests, as it were, upon the natural; and because the natural is thus spread under it is called the bed.

We shall find on going on to A. E. 163 an additional idea, wholly harmonious with the first but not stated before, namely, —

> The bed (in Rev. ii. 22) signifies doctrine of falsities, and likewise the natural man, because the doctrine of falsities is from no other source than the natural man separated from the spiritual. By bed is signified the natural man, because it is spread under the spiritual. That the bed signifies the natural man and also the doctrinals thereof may be seen from passages in the Word where it is named.

This new idea, or more full idea, of doctrine as constituting the bed of the mind is fully brought out in A. R. 137, where we have the statement, —

> That bed signifies doctrine is from correspondence; for as the body lies in its bed, so does the mind in its doctrine. But by the bed is signified the doctrine which one obtains either from the Word or from his own intelligence, for in this his mind rests quiet and, as it were, sleeps. Since by Jacob in the prophecies of the Word the church, as to doctrine, is signified, therefore it is said of him that he bowed himself upon the bed's head.

Thus we find given, directly from the correspondence between things natural and spiritual, the meaning of the bed, which was not so fully brought out in A. C. 6188, that, had we no further statement, we should clearly see, as we do from A. R. 137, what the passage involves.

BOOK NOTICES.

THROUGH DEATH TO LIFE. By REUEN THOMAS, D. D. Boston: Silver, Burdett, & Co. 1888. pp. 163. $1.25.

IN this handsome volume the pastor of a Congregational church at Brookline, Mass., prints ten sermons on the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians, dealing with the subjects involved in these familiar words. Among others to whom he acknowledges indebtedness, Dr. Thomas mentions Rev. E. H. Sears. We do not see that he discusses the Second Advent, but as to death and resurrection he is explicit and valiant. He does not believe in a material resurrection:

> Man is never disembodied. All through time he is an embodied spirit, and when he has sloughed off his trine body, his earth body, this body of his humiliation, he has still a body, but one suited to him in a way and to a degree to which this body never has been suited. The beautiful human form will remain very much more beautiful than even in its Apollo strength and ideal loveliness it has ever been. Every one shall have his own body suited to express his inward character. . . . It is quite impossible to mark what Paul has taught us on the resurrection of the body, and still believe that he means by "body" the flesh-and-blood body.

He uses freely the term "spiritual world," and makes use of the passages as to Elisha's servant and the Transfiguration just as our writers do. When he meets with something in Paul which does not say just what is wanted, Dr. Thomas is not hindered, but says "there is nothing so stupid as a perverse literalism."

We regard the book as marking in an unusual degree the progress of religious thought, and as showing, both in its candor and in its perception of spiritual realities, an advance which gives great encouragement to our people in their promulgation of the ideas here distinctly, if not fully, presented.

CHRIST IN THE LIFE. By REV. W. S. WOODBRIDGE. Boston: Universalist Publishing House. 1889. pp. 94. 25 cents.

THIS neat little book, sold at a very low price, is one of a series of "Manuals of Faith and Duty," published for the use of Universalists and others. The author writes in a plain, forcible way of

the historical reality of the Christ, his work in the life, and the hindrances caused by evils of various kinds which are described, and of the help given by the Bible, meditation, prayer, family worship, and the church. He then speaks of our relation to the Christ and of Christian growth and its results in the individual and in society, closing with remarks on the incentives and the rewards of Christian life. He believes this to be the "last time," the best era of the world. He deprecates frivolity, saying with truth:

> Children are not educated in the home as they ought to be; they are not under influences that tend to raise up sturdy, work-loving, burden-bearing men and women. We need not doubt that coming generations will be good card-players and graceful dancers, but we have some reason to be anxious on the score of the strength, the force of character of those who are subject to the prevailing influences of today.

He speaks seriously of the consequences of persistent sin:

> One's resistance to evil may become weaker and weaker. One may drop below the point of making any contest against sin. One may so habitually choose the evil and live in it, that there will be no more than fitful and momentary thoughts of the good; he may become hardened and rebellious, or utterly careless and indifferent. "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

This might be expected to remind the author of the danger of such a soul becoming what the Lord calls lost, dead and condemned; but, with that peculiar twist which the Universalist always gives to his logic, we find the author simply saying that "each step downward means an added measure to the journey upward." The man then is to be deprived of his will, we must conclude.

Missionary Talks on Subjects of New-Church Doctrine. By Rev. J. E. Bowers. London: James Speirs. 1889. pp. 185.

Mr. Bowers is well known as the devoted missionary of the Canada Association. By journeys, lectures, and the circulation of books from house to house, he has done a great deal of work. In these talks, some of which have already usefully appeared in our *Messenger*, and some in the *Morning Light*, he sets forth in a dialogue between himself and an inquirer all the leading doctrines. The talks are very interesting, and will give aid to us all in doing similar work. The book is as tasteful as its contents deserve.

THE LEAVEN AT WORK. By J. W. HANSON, D. D. Boston: Universalist Publishing House. 1888. pp. 177. 50 cents.

DR. HANSON further describes his book as treating of "some of the concessions of orthodoxy in the direction of Universalism." He begins by quoting from creeds what they say of reprobation and hell-fire, then points out their evil influence, gathers up the testimony of commentators, literary men, and progressive preachers, and shows that the movement is away from these old creeds, never to return to them. His work shows great compactness. As an exhibit of the awful doctrines we do not know of a better. He lets them speak for themselves. He does not dwell on his own view, but shows the progress towards it. The obvious comment is that a movement towards reasonable and Scriptural views does not involve an arrival at the extreme view that all men will be made alike hereafter, but the Universalist has cause to publish such a book which should have a wide reading.

A DAUGHTER OF EVE. By the author of "Margaret Kent." Boston: Ticknor & Co. 1889. pp. 447. $1.50.

THIS is a very bright and vigorous story, and almost an excellent one. The daughter of Eve is truly such in her desertion of her lover for an aged and rich husband, in her utter superficiality, and in her return to an unworthy life, after promising in widowhood to do better. Her portrait is, however, not so sharply drawn as that of her mother, who is a most interesting virago, and for whose final discomfiture the reader eagerly looks, but in vain. There is one worthy man, though he is a sadly impulsive one, and one thoroughly good woman. On the whole, there is no marked progress with any character, and the reader is tempted to ask that the author's truly fine gifts be employed in bringing at least one person out of wickedness into nobleness. But, perhaps, the writer does not believe in such a miracle, and is, like so many brilliant people, a mere naturalist. We read with eagerness what she writes, for it is all so life-like, if earthly.

OUR LEGACY. Boston: American Unitarian Association. 1889. pp. 65. Cloth, 30 cents; paper, 15 cents.

THIS is a little series of meditations on the phrases of the Lord's Prayer viewed in the light of personal religion. The idea of temptation seems to be softened so as almost to lose sight of

the fact of evil influences, but the whole is wholesome and profitable reading.

The *Methodist Review* for March was as strong as ever, discussing important subjects such as "Inspiration and Infallibility." Its editor has a plain word to say about cherubim:

> In no instance does a cherub appear as a personal being, with voice, message, sympathies, or any exhibition of personality. They belong not to any order of intelligences, but to the iconographic department of ecclesiastical archæology. Whatever the interpretation, it should be held as the deciphering of a figure, and not the key to any conceivable personality.

Light out of Darkness is a little essay by a colored man, Dr. J. T. Still, of Boston, on the subject of his race, its condition, and its prospects. He seems to us to argue well in the main, but we do not see anything wrong in separate colored churches, when we know how wide is the difference between African and Anglo-Saxon worship, and when we believe that the black race will make more development, if left in part to itself, than if kept in hand by the white race, which is strong in leadership.

The *Nykirkeligt Sendebud* is a most welcome visitor from Copenhagen, where Rev. William Winslow edits it as a monthly publication for the Danes at home and abroad. The number before us contains sixteen well-printed pages, including a sermon by Mr. Winslow on the "Nativity," extracts from Swedenborg translated by Mr. Winslow, and other matter giving full information about the Sunday meeting, the publications, and so forth.

The *New-Church Reading Circle*, of Chicago, has been joined with the *Parish Register*, so that they now appear as one. We like the change, because it seems to us that the multiplication of our periodicals can be carried to an extreme, to a point which involves their weakness financially and their lack of influence spiritually. We wish this monthly paper abundant success.

Swedenborg Bifrons is the title of a pamphlet published by the Theosophical Society in London, and written by a member of it. The writer appears at disadvantage on account of the bitter denunciations in which he indulges, and which we do not find except in one whose feelings are too much aroused to leave his judgment unclouded. He first denounces our organization, and then seems to trample upon every sacred thing for which Christianity stands.

THE NEW CHURCH.

LESSONS FROM MISSIONARY EXPERIENCE.

A MONTH of missionary travel in Georgia and Florida is not enough to qualify one to give advice to missionaries, but it is a period sufficient to bring one face to face with many earnest people, and to impress upon him some points which it may be well to state.

The Missionary.

To be a successful missionary we are sure that the best qualifications are necessary. It is a great mistake to suppose that a lack of those traits which are necessary in the pastorate will not be felt in the missionary field. The man who is socially disagreeable from any cause, the man who is impatient in argument, the man who is prosy or superficial or rambling in pulpit address, — all these will fail as missionaries. And failure here is disastrous. His coming is announced. A church or hall is procured. Careful notice is given. The hour and the man arrive. If now he is wordy, or dull, or prolix, or condemnatory, or abstruse, or illogical, the stranger is disgusted, the friend is disappointed, the cause is injured.

If, on the other hand, the missionary be kindly, discreet, clear and concise in statement, a friendly man socially, and able to adapt himself to every place and people, lasting good is done, and progress is made on every line of truth. If we have any such men, these are the ones who should be selected and sent forth to sow beside all waters.

Spirit of the Missionary.

No other motive should govern the work and the worker than the love of the Lord and the fellow-man. The open Bible should be the missionary's creed. He should preach about the Lord and His second coming, about the Word as fulfilled by Him, about the life to come, about the problems of the day and Swedenborg's place among men, in such a way and with such a spirit that men and women and children will feel the presence of the Lord and be

moved thereby, not only to receive out of the Word its newly perceived teaching, but also to raise to a higher life and to a zeal for souls.

Services of Worship.

We want more full and fervent missionary meetings. It is almost incredible, but it is most unfortunately true, that, in such meetings, there is neither singing nor responsive reading. When in half an hour one could mark a few pages of the liturgy which would furnish an inexpensive and all-sufficient book of worship; yet so far do our people dwell from the mission field that they have never produced anything of this sort. The result is that services are now bare, and give no idea of the grace and power of our home worship. If this matter is delayed much longer, some individual must, for the sake of the cause, assume the right to do what is necessary.

Tracts for Distribution.

At the close of lectures many persons come forward to take tracts from the table or edge of the platform. They are sometimes disappointed in getting just what they want because the tract societies furnish the missionary with many that are in series, or that are simply useful sermons, or that deal with some point not elementary. It would be well if a selection were made, and if those were selected, say a dozen, which dealt most wisely with the primary subjects. A missionary furnished with these would find the usefulness of his tract distribution doubled, at the least, and much time would be saved now spent in trying to find something complete in itself to give to an inquirer.

Permanent Circuits.

When we have the right man for the missionary work, and have equipped him with the right tracts and hymns, we should give him a field and keep him in it. Georgia and Florida make such a field. Each would in time become a field by itself. The man should dwell with his people, and should go about steadily and minister to them as to a great parish and in the spirit of a pastor. Nothing would be more agreeable to a truly apostolic man than such a work, in which he would be constantly opening new places, while he cared diligently for the old ones, till visible good would be done in a land in many ways chastened and prepared.

REMOVAL OF THE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL.

THE Theological School was opened in Waltham, Mass., in 1866, soon after the session of Convention at which the establishment of such an institution was determined upon. Waltham was already the site of a school conducted in the light of our doctrines and furnishing such instruction as precedes entrance into a high grade college. Temporarily accommodated in the school building, in the chapel, and in the residence of Rev. Thomas Worcester, D. D., the institution remained in Waltham till 1878, when the decease of Dr. Worcester, and other causes, led to its transfer to Boston. There, under the charge of Rev. John Worcester, as president, it has continued till 1889. Meanwhile it has instructed some sixty young men, among whom are the pastors in Portland, Me., Boston Highlands, Brockton, Bridgewater, Abington, Yarmouth, and other places in Massachusetts, Providence, R. I., New York, Orange, N. J., Chicago, Ill., St. Louis, Mo., and so on.

On our return from a recent mission tour we learned, with equal surprise and satisfaction, that the estate formerly occupied by President Jared Sparks of Harvard University, and situated in close vicinity to the college buildings, had been purchased by the managers of the Theological School, and would be occupied next autumn.

We regard the step as indicating a noble zeal which should call forth a hearty response from all who are interested in our cause. While the school is yet in its infancy, while its instructors are comparatively unknown to the learned world, and while its students are often men of moderate intellectual ability, it is decided to place the institution before the world and to give it every opportunity to let its light shine.

The managers may rest assured that the instructors will do all that lies in their power to meet the new demand upon them; nor will they forget that in the Divine Truth there is strength.

CORRESPONDENCES REVIEWED.

WE have been much interested in the notices of Rev. John Worcester's book on the "Correspondences of Plants," as they appear in the religious press. Kindly commendation, with hints of obscurity in some of the ideas, has been the rule. It is no wonder that critics wholly unaccustomed to this subject should find

some things obscure, especially in that branch of it which relates to plants. The *Christian Union*, most generous of all, has a column's notice by a New Churchman, and the review is well worth reprinting:

Common speech bears witness to the relation everywhere existing between the world of matter and the world of mind. The terms high and low, light and dark, warm and cold, and a hundred others, are applied to mental things as commonly as to material. We go further, and use the names of animals, tame and fierce, to describe the gentle or cruel feelings of the heart. We borrow words, too, from the vegetable kingdom, and speak of a principle as taking root in the mind, growing, bearing fruit, and scattering seed. Every realm of nature offers pictures of the changing moods of the world within, and gives us terms in which to describe our emotions and thoughts. This relation is not a chance or superficial likeness. It is rather evidence that the worlds without and within are parts of one universe, expressions of one Divine mind.

The perception of this relation between matter and mind is nothing new. It underlies the ancient mythologies and hieroglyphics, and has always been the delight of poets. What gives it surpassing importance is the fact that this relation is made the means of revealing Divine truth to men in the Sacred Scriptures. The Saviour spoke of seed falling by the wayside and into good ground, when describing the reception of his Word. He spoke of the barren fig tree, and He meant His church, with its abundant learning but no fruit of kindly works. There is no part of the Divine Word which does not in like manner contain within its natural symbols lessons of spiritual and Divine truth.

It is the purpose of the work before us to study in detail the natural objects mentioned in the Bible, observing their characteristics and their uses, and then turning to the world within to discover as exactly as possible their spiritual correlatives. The knowledge thus gained is made useful in interpretating passages of Scripture.

The animals of the Bible were studied in a former volume by the same author. The present volume is devoted to the plants, the minerals, and the atmospheres. We are shown how the suggestion of some new use falls like a seed into the mind. If received it takes root and gathers among the new circumstances materials for performing its use. It gradually matures a plan, reaching out, perhaps, with many branches. Next it meditates carefully upon the work to be done, as the plant digests its juices in its leaves. Many a plant, like the barren fig tree, goes no further. But a fruitful tree does not rest here. Opportunities for use are at hand. The careful thoughts are happy as with the bright sweetness of flowers in the prospect of accomplishment. At last the fruit appears in the form of good work, and in it are seeds — suggestions of like good works which others may do. About fifty different plants, from the olive to the grass, are studied in as many short chapters of this work.

It will be new to readers not familiar with the writings of Swedenborg to see the correspondence of mind and matter regarded as extending to every particular of growth and structure and use; and to see the symbolism of the Bible treated as scientific and exact in every word. The subject is a large one — as large as science itself — and cannot be exhausted in a few hurried moments; but we

believe a careful reading, in their order, of the chapters presented in this volume will do much to convince a reverent reader of the Bible that its symbols are full of meaning, and that their key is to be found in the universal relation of natural and spiritual things. The style of the book is clear, but almost too concise. Its spirit, too, is excellent, and the mechanical execution of the work quite faultless.

BIRMINGHAM.

Birmingham Faces and Places is the title of a periodical, the name of which is a full description. We have received, by the kindness of Mr. John Bragg, a copy which contains an account of the Wretham Road Society and of its pastor, Rev. R. R. Rodgers, and gives a fine view of the church and a good picture of Mr. Rodgers.

From the annual report of the Wretham Road Society, full as it is of interesting information, we take for our readers the closing remarks of the report of Rev. R. R. Rodgers:

Measuring our present position by future possibilities, our work now, however satisfactory, is the day of small things. With grateful hearts we acknowledge the good Providence which has hitherto opened up the way. No one can say that our labor has been entirely in vain, but no one can say that our task is ended. The history of the New Church has yet to be made; its spread is certain, but slow; and its triumphs rest securely on the scientific, social, intellectual, and, above all, the spiritual progress of mankind. If we are but united and faithful to the Master's bidding, the way before us will lead us forward in security and peace, the mourning over our present slow progress will be turned to rejoicing, our devotion will become contagious, — for God does not work apart from, but through the coöperation of His people, — and the prophecy will be fulfilled, "A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in His time."

THE LITERARY WORLD ON NEW-CHURCH WORKS.

THE *Literary World* of Feb. 1 contains a very favorable criticism upon the two works, "Emanuel Swedenborg, Servus Domini," by the Hon. John Bigelow; and "The Soul: or, Rational Psychology," translated and edited by the Rev. Frank Sewall.

After recording Swedenborg's super-eminent attainments in science, and his anticipation of several so-called scientific discoveries, it remarks:

No sooner had he assimilated any knowledge than he hastened to impart it with a generosity which was not always appreciated.

Not merely as an author was he remarkable, but also as a man.

His aim in all his studies was to find the soul or ultimate source of power; and after reaping the field of human learning, he gave up his harvests to mankind in his masterpiece, "Rational Psychology. . . .

The main feature of Swedenborg's teaching is love. . . .

The source of bodily and spiritual love is the love of the Deity, and thence the love of one's fellow-man. . . .

The soul is the very being of the body, so that when the soul departs the body cannot exist, and falls to decay. . . .

We live because the soul descends so as to engage in the functions of this lower world. . . .

We die, because the end of creation is that there may be a universal society of souls which shall constitute heaven. . . .

The soul is immaterial, hence it contains in itself nothing that will perish. . . .

We come now to the grand precept of Swedenborg's ethical teaching, which is, of we wish to test the merit of an action or a line of conduct, we must ever ask ourselves, "To what end?"

Praise of a monument like the "Rational Psychology" might seem a superflous impertinence; and a notice, however long, would give but a feeble notion of the splendor and beauty of the workmanship. The book must be read to be appreciated.

LETTER FROM MICHIGAN.

We have received a letter from a Baptist minister at the West, who says:

At the expiration of my subscription please discontinue. This is one of the hardest words to say that I ever said, but age and excessive reading have so affected my eyesight that its condition is becoming alarming. I have no one to read to me, and it is a continual temptation to have the MAGAZINE within my reach. I hope that, with care, my sight will improve, and if so, no publication will be more welcome than yours.

He then says that he lives near a Freewill Baptist College, in which several students are favorable to our theology. The theological professor, too, is interested. Our friend says that he has done "solid work" for us and wishes us Godspeed. We thank him for his kindly letter, and reciprocate his good wishes. Surely the eyes of his spirit are not dim.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL CONFERENCE.

On the twenty-second of February the usual Conference was held in Boston. In the absence of Mr. J. T. Prince, President, Rev. J. E. Werren presided. The Committee on Methods of Instruction, Books and Materials for Teachers, and Books for Libraries all presented good reports. An object lesson on Bible raiment was given by Rev. T. F. Wright. Rev. J. K. Smyth made use of a series of lantern views to instruct a class of young children. The Committee on the Normal Class or General Meeting

for Teachers was continued, and it is to be hoped that this important agency of good will be successfully established in due time. The officers were reëlected. All present enjoyed the day.

THE NEW YORK ASSOCIATION.

This Association held its annual meeting Feb. 22, in the new and convenient church at Orange, N. J. Rev. J. C. Ager presided. Some earnest missionary work was reported. Mr. Barton, acting on his own account, had sold over a thousand of our books and had distributed about two thousand tracts. A good report came from the German societies. The principal topic discussed was the continued desire of the Association for the temporary endowment of its President with ordaining powers, and it was decided to present the matter to Convention again. In electing officers, Rev. J. C. Ager declined to be again chosen president, and Rev. S. S. Seward was elected.

USE OF ASSOCIATION REPORTS.

One use of printing Association and Convention reports in the Magazine is in giving information to those who otherwise would not know of our condition. Thus the *Watchman* (Baptist), under the head of "Swedenborgians in New England," states the societies in our Association and gives other information derived from the report printed with our December number. The *Watchman*, if the Maine Association printed its report in these pages, would know that our body does not embrace all the societies in New England.

SWEDENBORG AND DANTE.

In Rev. Frank Sewall's very interesting paper under this head, in this number, and which will be followed by another in our next issue, he refers to his article on "The Italian Renaissance in its Relation to the Lord's Second Advent." This appears in the numbers of the *New-Church Magazine* (London) for April and May of this year.

GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

The paper naïvely called *Hobbies* gives an account of our little society and its house of worship in Grand Rapids, Mich., from which it would appear that our people there have seen many vicissitudes, but have held on, and are now in a fair way to be a living church.

THE RELIGIOUS WORLD.

REV. JOHN HUNTER ON SATAN.

An influential and progressive Congregational preacher of Glasgow, Scotland, thus wisely treated recently the subject of Satan:

The reverend gentleman observed it was in the prologue to the poem of Job that Satan appeared for the first time in the Bible as a distinct figure, but the representations found there ought to be treated as imaginative conceptions, and not read as a sober statement of actual facts. But neither in the Book of Job nor in any of the earlier books of the Old Testament did they find any trace of the later theological belief in a powerful evil personality outside of man, and exercising influence upon him. There were statements in the New Testament, and certain strange phenomena in human life, which seemed to many to substantiate the belief in the Satan of theology, "a power in the universe, not ourselves, making for unrighteousness"; but, as a simple matter of fact, the Hebrew people in the earlier periods of their national history knew nothing of that doctrine, and it did not become an article of Jewish belief till after the Babylonian captivity. It was altogether an unjustifiable interpretation to identify the serpent of the Eden poem with the devil of later Jewish speculation and belief. They were never identified till after Jewish rabbis began their cabalistic interpretations of the sacred writings. The first of such an interpretation was in the Apocrypha. There was no proof that the old serpent or dragon of the Book of Revelation had any reference to the Eden story, and if there were distinct proof that it had such a reference it would not necessarily follow that it was the idea of the early Hebrew writer. The Book of Revelation was plainly symbolical, and even the best scholars had ever been at strife concerning the interpretation of its symbols. The "Paradise Lost" of Milton was most responsible for the popular interpretation of the parable of the forbidden tree, but the point of that parable, Mr. Hunter said, was lost if they put the temptation outside the constitution of man. The serpent he regarded as symbolical of the subtle pleading of the lower nature. He found it difficult to have respect for the traditional theological scheme and plan of the world. He did not judge others, but for him to believe it, he would have first to surrender his faith in the infinite wisdom and goodness of God. The problem of temptation and sin was quite difficult enough without diabolical agency. It was not possible, in his judgment, to justify the ways of a God who permitted diabolical agents to seduce and ruin creatures who found it often only too hard to resist the tendencies to evil they found in their constitution and circumstances. But they were not required to believe it. Out of the heart, said the Divine Teacher, came all evil thoughts, and every man, said James, was tempted when he was drawn away by his own desire and enticed. If temptation and sin came as Christ dis-

tinctly asserted from every man's own nature, Satan, as commonly understood, had no place or function. All the evil could be wrought somehow without his agency and assistance.

COMMUNION WITHOUT COMMUNING.

WHO has failed to notice the significance of the fact that, by those who do not acknowledge the Lord, the communion is either neglected altogether or regarded as a mere form? Dr. F. H. Hedge, a leading Unitarian, makes a notably significant suggestion in the *Christian Register:*

At stated times, in most of our churches, there is a celebration of the Lord's Supper called the communion service. There is great beauty and great propriety in this special commemoration of the Founder of our religion, provided it is wisely as well as æsthetically managed. The service, I think, should be largely musical, with short addresses from the pastor and perhaps from spiritually competent members of the congregation. Bread and wine may appear, may be exhibited as symbols of the historical occasion. *But they should not be handed round to be partaken of by the congregation.* The act of deglutition is not an edifying sanctity: it is not an æsthetic performance, and is altogether unnecessary. The Scriptural phrase which occurs in the Fourth Gospel, "Except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of Man and drink of his blood, ye have no life in you," has no reference, I think, to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The author of the Fourth Gospel does not mention the institution of the ordinance.

The coolness of this defiance of the words, "Take, eat, this is My body; drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the new covenant," brings to mind at once the saying, "For neither did His brethren believe in Him."

THE IMPULSE OBEYED.

THE following is to be added to the instances of one being inwardly led to do that which resulted to his good:

In the city of Pittsburgh, last month, a few minutes after the fall of the Willey Building, a stranger who was gazing at the wrecked structures from the opposite side of Wood Street entered into a conversation with a *Dispatch* reporter. He looked a good deal agitated and said: "For about five years on every week-day, I have passed along that side of Wood Street at about the hour this terrible disaster occurred. Today I was on my way to Fifth Avenue, and had reached the Chamber of Commerce Building when a sudden impulse came upon me to take the other side of the street. I crossed over, and before I reached the sidewalk the crash came. Had I kept along as I was going I would have been in front of the Willey Building just in time to be crushed by bricks and falling timber. I can no more account for the action which probably saved my life than you can. I simply felt that I must do it, and I do not know that I felt even a premonition of danger."

THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT.

We know that our readers will see that this woman in Kambini, East Africa, has the right spirit:

I have no house, so I take my place under a large tree, and the children, sixty-six in number, seat themselves on the ground. I printed some letters with wooden type. These are our books. I made figures also, and these I pasted on a board which is held against the tree by one of the big boys, while I point and repeat the names. I teach them the Commandments, Lord's Prayer, verses of Scripture, sewing, and singing. They seem to enjoy it much, and I would not change my position for anything. It is such a pleasure to work in the Master's vineyard. It is true I cannot do much, but I am trying day by day to sow the seed of Christ's love in the hearts and minds of these people, and as I believe the Lord has given me this work, I am trying to obey him with a willing heart, a willing mind, and willing feet.

A SPIRITUAL CHURCH.

In the *Independent*, Rev. C. F. Thwing, of Minneapolis, tells of his church receiving the communion at its annual meeting, and justly says:

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An exchange says, —

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